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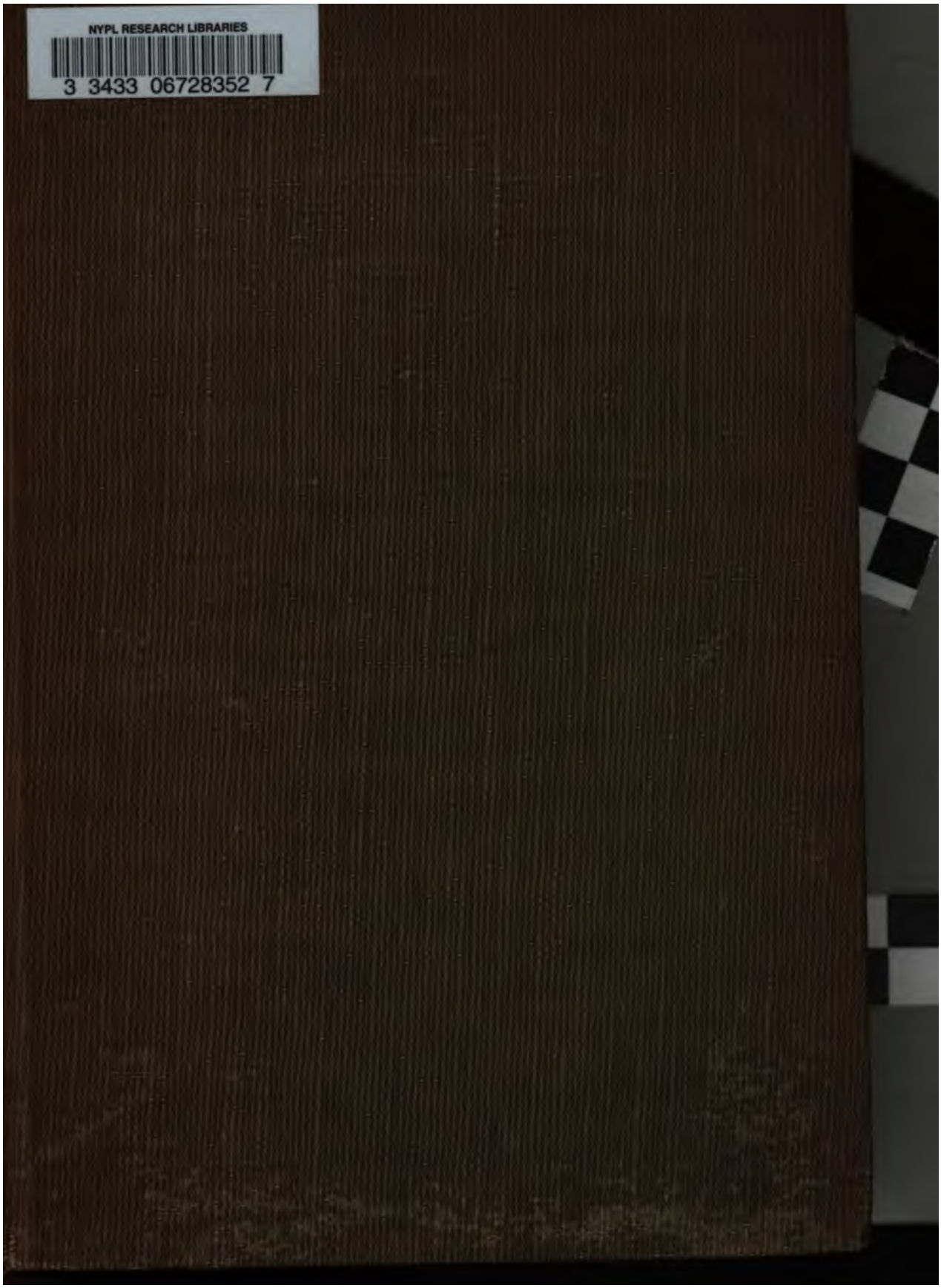
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CHARACTERISTICS

"'IS N'T SHE NOBLE-LOOKING?'"

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Author's Definitive Edition

CHARACTERISTICS

BY

S. WEIR MITCHELL, M.D.
LL.D. HARVARD AND EDINBURGH

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1910

CHARACTERISTICS

CHARACTERISTICS.

I.

HIS book is a broken record of portions of the lives of certain friends of mine, and of what I, Owen North, physician, have seen and heard. My people, who were of the Society of Friends, came from Wales, and were with Penn in the *Welcome*, but had lapsed from grace and followed the religious guidance of Hicks. I was further emancipated by the study of medicine, which I took to because it interested me and not of necessity, since at the age of twenty-one I was a man of ample means, free to do as I liked. After a year of hospital work, and three years of added study in Europe, I came home to settle in my native city.

Whatever value this irregular account of myself and my friends may have is due to the care with which I have watched the developmental growth of character. I like, therefore, to say at the outset what I appear to myself to have been—leaving the reader who likes to follow me to learn for himself what life did to foster the good or ill that was mine by nature. In early

manhood I was shy, reserved, and self-conscious. Always ambitious, and disliking failure, my youth did not supply me with such other competence of motives as to urge me to success in consecutive study. What I liked to do I did fairly well. When older I found that the power to do best what I enjoyed doing led at last to the easier doing of whatever I willed to do. I cannot remember that as a boy any intellectual work had for me the smallest attraction. In those days it was thought in my native city not quite reputable to have no distinct occupation in life, and under this influence I began to study medicine. As I became increasingly interested in the studies of the profession I had chosen, I was curiously surprised to find that the capacity to concentrate my thoughts, which I never had in youth, rapidly grew; in fact I developed later than most men. About the time I began to like scientific study I lost for life the sense of ennui which had been one of the peculiarities of my childhood, and too, with success, became quietly sure of myself and more and more capable of sustained effort. Finally my long absence abroad enabled me usefully to escape from many of the narrowing associations of my youth, and to enter on life untrammeled. I found, indeed, as I grew older, that the comrades of my youth were no longer such. I had moved away from them; but friendly time brought others whom I learned to love better and with more reason. It is only needful to add that I succeeded in my profession, and at the outbreak of the great civil war was in an enviable position, having a practice far beyond what would have been possible in Europe at my time of life.

The call of war stirred me in many ways. My people had been Friends from the day of their landing in America, but I myself had ceased to be, like them, troubled with scruples as to war. I only hesitated as to how best I could serve my country. That in some way I must do this was clear to me. As to slavery I had been little disturbed; it was a gangrene sure in time to die of its own accursedness. But the thought of a dismembered land, and, above all, the final insult of Sumter, settled for me, as it did for thousands, what I ought to do.

I soon saw that as a surgeon I could be of most use. I was, as the world goes, rich, and had no need to consider the future. Accordingly I gave up all my appointments, and entered the service as an assistant surgeon in the regular army. Of this life I mean to say little.

I could wish that some one would fitly record the immense services of my profession during the great war, but this is not the place to do so; and I content myself with the merely personal statement that I was almost incessantly occupied with field duty. This open-air life gave me the physical vigor I somewhat lacked; and this I saw occur in many others. Despite the cripples made by war, and those who came out of it diseased, I am disposed to think that the survivors returned to civil life with, on the whole, a larger capital of available energy than the like number would have possessed had there been no contest. I was soon to learn in person how valuable was this toughening process.

We were lying before Petersburg, very weary of the

siege, with its many failures. An attack at dawn on the left flank of Lee's extending lines necessitated the usual ambulance service, and for this I was detailed. The effort on our part failed, and the return attack cut off for a time my ambulance party and a number of wounded. We were in a rather dense wood, and remained unperceived until toward evening; nor was it prudent to attempt escape. The firing had been distant and irregular most of the day, and near dark, hearing the groans of wounded men somewhat nearer to the edge of the wood, I took a sergeant and two men, and went in search of them. There were many dead, and, lying among them, three more or less badly hurt; one of these needed immediate amputation of an arm, and we set about this at once. Meanwhile a sharp firing broke out on the right; the balls began to fly over us so that the twigs fell about us from the trees. Rarely does a man have to operate under fire. This time it fell upon me to do so, and as I began my assistant suddenly cried out, "It is no use, doctor." A sharp convulsion shook the body of the wounded man, and, looking up, I saw that a bullet had gone through his head. A moment later I felt a blow on the back of my neck, and lost consciousness.

I cannot say how long I remained insensible. By degrees I began to see the trees, the moon, and the swift hurry of clouds across its brightness. I faintly remember that at first I connected their quick motion with retreat and failure, and was hurt with the shame of it. Then again I lost it all, and for a time—how long I do not know—rose to brief spells of dream-haunted consciousness. The sadness of dawn was in

the sky before I was fully myself. I heard the moan of wounded men, and knew that it was my duty to take care of them. I tried to rise, and could not; my arms and legs were alike motionless. I made an immense effort, and knew that it was in vain. I was also paralyzed as to sensation, and could not feel that I touched the ground. But about my neck I felt the blood dried stiff in my collar. I must, however, have been still bleeding freely, for again I lost myself while divided between wonder and horror at my state.

At about sunrise I was awakened by familiar voices, and presently was rolled over and inspected by a hospital steward and one of my brother surgeons, to whom were soon added two line officers. I could not speak, but could hear more and more easily as they lifted me to a stretcher and made my obituary in a few brief and not altogether eulogistic phrases, with a final remark by a captain that "He treated me at Cold Harbor and got me a long sick-leave, and gave derned little medicine, too."

One man remarked, "Good fellow, but a dreamy sort of a cuss." And thus, having died for my country, and heard its opinion of me in little, I came to myself. As my bearers trudged along I had first a misty recognition of the fun of it, then curiosity as to where I was hit, but at length pain in my neck from the to-and-fro roll of the stretcher as my bearers, keeping step from habit, moved toward camp.

At last I was able to say, "Break step. I 'm not dead."

"By George! The doctor 's alive!" exclaimed one of my aids, and so, after this excursion out of my wits,

I got into a good tent and, after a more thorough examination, was sent home to die.

A bullet had passed through the muscles at the back of my neck and paralyzed the spinal column without directly wounding it. For several months I lay quite powerless, all that there was of me within control of my will being the head and its contents. I could not stir arm or leg; I even spoke with difficulty; and would awake gasping for breath at night, because my will was more or less needed to keep my chest in motion.

I was for weeks, as I well knew, on the margin of another world, and absolutely clear in mind to consider the peril. I had no wish to die, despite my horrible state, for I had no pain, and it is pain which makes the ill man indifferent to living. Neither did the nearness of death alarm me. I remember that I concluded that the naturalness of death must be strongly set in our instinctive being, because, although I have seen many wounded or ill men die slowly without suffering, and fully possessed of reason, obvious fear of death, when death is near, scarcely exists, and most men, under these conditions, seem to await their fate with calmness. In fact, I can recall only one case where a man, conscious of death at hand, showed intensity of fear.

I lay at rest, if rest it can be called, in my own rooms, and had all that means could give me. Friends I had too, for I have a talent for friendship, and these came and sat with me or read to me. I remember, however, that some who were very dear to me in health did not seem to fit into my new conditions of

life, and that in my helplessness the women whom I was able to see were always the more acceptable visitors. I suspect that at this time I must have been very sensitive. Certain persons depressed me; I could not easily say why others soothed. Now and then came some one who made me feel as though I had taken a strong tonic.

This priceless gift nature has given only to a few. It cannot be acquired; no imitation of it succeeds; nor is its quality easy of analysis. It is not manner, neither is it dependent on a sanguine temperament, as one might fancy. Nor is it a part of such mere unthinking manners as make some men always willing to predict success. One comes here to the question of professional manners, a delicate matter of which I thought a good deal as I became a more and more sensitive human instrument. There is no place where good breeding has so sweet a chance as at the bedside. There are many substitutes, but the sick man is a shrewd detective, and soon or late gets at the true man inside of the doctor.

I know, alas! of men who possess cheap manufactured manners adapted, as they believe, to the wants of "the sick-room"—a term I loathe. According to the man and his temperament do these manners vary, and represent sympathetic cheerfulness or sympathetic gloom. They have, I know, their successes and their commercial value, and may be of such skilful make as to deceive for a time even clever women, which is saying a great deal for the manufacturer. Then comes the rarer man who is naturally tender in his contact with the sick, and who is by good fortune full of edu-

cated tact. He has the dramatic quality of instinctive sympathy, and, above all, knows how to control it. If he has directness of character too, although he may make mistakes (as who does not?), he will be, on the whole, the best adviser for the sick, and the completeness of his values will depend upon mental qualities which he may or may not possess in large amount.

But over and above all this there is, as I have urged, some mystery in the way in which certain men refresh the patient with their presence. I fancy that every doctor who has this power—and sooner or later he is sure to know that he has it—also learns that there are days when he has it not. It is in part a question of his own physical state; at times the virtue has gone out of him.

The gift is not confined to men. One middle-aged woman had it for me when I lay helpless in my palsied state. She was a person so simple, so direct, so easily sure to do and so certain to abide by the right thing, that to unthinking people she may have appeared to be commonplace. An angelic form of good sense dominated by tenderness underlay the positiveness of her character and was a part of her nature. Moreover, she possessed also sense of humor, that gentlest helpmate in life. I do not mean that she was creatively humorous; she was only appreciatively and apprehensively humorous.

I had a rather grim but most able surgeon. He seemed to me to have a death-certificate ready in his pocket. He came, asked questions, examined me as if I were a machine, and was too absorbed in the *physical me* to think about that *other me* whose tentacula he

knocked about without mercy, or without knowledge that tenderness was needed. Our consultant was a physician with acquired manners. He always agreed with what I said, and was what I call aggressively gentle; so that he seemed to me to be ever saying with calm self-approval, "See how gentle I am." I am told that with women he was delightfully positive, and I think this may have been true, but he was incapable of being firm with the obstinate. His formulas distressed me, and were many. He was apt to say, as he entered my room, "Well, and how are we to-day?" And this I hated, because I once knew a sallow undertaker who, in the same fashion, used to associate himself with the corpse, and comfort the living with the phrase, "We are looking quite natural to-day."

My soft-mannered and mellifluous doctor who thought well of himself was nevertheless a most intelligent physician; but some people possess no mirror for social conduct, and the court fool, who tells men the truth, is out of fashion. He went along in life not knowing how absurd he was at times. To have known would have lessened his usefulness. Self-ignorance is sometimes an essential condition of utility.

My good little woman friend supplied me with what my doctors did not, and to this day I cannot tell how she did it. Despite, however, her too rare visits, and those of others who were less helpful, I had a horrible amount of time on my hands. Much reading wearied me, and so I lay imprisoned within the limits of my memories, or took a curious interest in the minutiæ of the little life or action I could see in my room or through my windows. I watched for long months the

leaves come and flourish and depart from a tree (a horse-chestnut across the street), and saw its varnished buds unfold to queer insect shapes and then spread out into green tents. The spider which spun on my window-pane I would not allow to be disturbed, and even the flies were sources of interest. Far away were two weathercocks; one was too motionlessly conservative to stir with the breeze, but now and then, when the wind was east, it was correct. It seemed to me like the man with one unchanging opinion, and with whom the world comes some day to agree. The other cock was an honest, mutable fellow, and warned me that a norther was on the way to torment me, as it always did, with a horrible sense of futile restlessness. I used to lie and wonder whether the cock was chosen for a sign of changeful winds because it was a reminder to the unstable Peter. But these trifles are of the intimate life of chronic sickness, and perhaps are of little interest to the thoughtless who are well.

The man thus imprisoned within himself recovers by effort a vast amount of memorial property presumed to have been lost. If I shut my eyes and lay still, as, indeed, I had to do, and then seized firmly on some remembrance of verse or prose or events, by degrees it seemed to aggregate other memories long forgotten. It was like a process of crystallization—to stir up the fluid is apt to disturb the formative action. If I stopped to think, compare, and conclude, I found that I interfered with the process of accumulative recollection. My favorite amusement was to recall men I had known, and to construct for them in my mind characters out of what I had seen or heard of

them under the varying conditions of camp, battle, or wounds. This would lead me to anticipate what their future lives would be and how in certain crises of existence they might act. I did this also for myself over and over, until it seemed to me that I could be sure of my precise conduct under any and almost every variety of circumstances. Some of the insights I thus won by these excursions into the puzzle-land of character used to startle me at times, because it seemed as though the concentration and intensity of attention imposed upon me by my state enabled me, from the memory of a single interview or incident, to work out easily the whole characteristics of a man. This power did not continue in as full force when my conditions of life were altered. What it left with me was an unusual fondness for the study of men and women, and this I take to be a rare taste, because although people make guesses at character, and novelists and dramatists are presumed to study it for a purpose, and some men of affairs have an almost instinctive appreciation of what a man in contact with a given matter will do, the tendency to study character for its own sake from a naturalist's point of view is most uncommon. In fact, too, the business-man's working knowledge of character and the writer's are distinct, says George Eliot; the former cannot put in words what he uses any more than the latter can use in the give and take of life what he can so well put on paper.

I look back with surprise at the months I passed as a crippled man, my head alone alive. My cheerfulness was due to temperament, and also to what I may call the temperament of my disease, for people who have

spinal lesions without pain are apt to be more calm and unirritable than those who have certain visceral disorders. Consumptives are said to be hopeful, but the sick liver predicts damnation. A learned divine said a thing of extraordinary wisdom when he announced that no man, however secure he may be in mind as to his future life, ever dies a triumphant death with disease below the diaphragm.

On the 8th of May, 1866, I observed that I could wiggle the second toe of my left foot. I have ever since had a peculiar affection for this little sub-member of my locomotive organs. Head and toe were now both alive, and seemed to salute each other across a length of motionless body. I indicated this immense fact to my affable doctor. He put on his glasses and looked. Then he said, "You will get well."

To which I replied, "I always was sure of that."

I saw that it was disagreeable to him to be thus anticipated by hope, and so said no more. In the evening he brought the consulting surgeon, and triumphantly pointed out the prophetic conduct of this hitherto uninteresting part of me.

I am not concerned to dwell upon the medical details of my case except as they bear upon life or character. Sensation came back first, and in about a month I could move both legs and arms; but I had become the victim of a new experience. As my locomotive powers increased I suffered agonizing pain in the back and neck and arms. It was almost my first enduring personal sensation of acute pain, and it lasted long enough to enable me to make acquaintance with every variety of torment. Civilized mankind has

of will ceased to torture, but in our process of being civilized we have won, I suspect, intensified capacity to suffer. The savage does not feel pain as we do; nor, as we examine the descending scale of life, do animals seem to have the acuteness of pain-sense to which we have arrived, a fact I have often observed in regard to wounded horses on the battle-field. I had at one time served awhile as assistant surgeon in the wards of a hospital to which were sent most of the bad cases of wounded nerves. In this abode of torment, where sixty thousand hypodermatic injections of morphia were given and needed within a year, I saw every form of suffering. But personal acquaintance with pain is quite another matter. It inclines me to think that every doctor ought to go through a sharp little course of colic, gout, and, if you please, a smart fit of hysterics before venturing on the practice of his profession. An old friend of mine used to say that all clergymen should have a mild education in iniquity as a preparation for their career, but this I hardly hold to as a serious opinion.

Assuredly I had never realized the influential qualities of pain as I now came to do. Of all the means not of his own making which degrade, debase, and morally ruin a man, pain seems to be the most potent. I became irritable, perverse, ungrateful, and selfish. I lay abed thinking how I could put my tortures into language descriptive enough to impress the infernal calm of that placid doctor, who came and went, and was as cool as I had been in the wards of that museum of anguish to which I have above referred. I had been wont to think and speak philosophically of pain,

but this continual and ingeniously varied torture was to me a novel experience, and left on my mind the belief that certainly an abode of eternal torment would have the effect of making men hopelessly regret lost opportunities, but would as surely make them morally worse, if it left them leisure to think at all.

I steadily resisted all efforts to induce me to use sedatives until one day, toward evening, when I had a new performance in my hands, as if they were being rasped with hot files. Then I yielded, and my doctor gave me a hypodermatic injection of morphia. I lay awake all night in perfect comfort, heedless of the passage of time, and wondering at the bliss of relief. 'T was heaven bought with hell, for the next day I was doubly tormented.

None who have not known long chronic illness can conceive of the misery enforced idleness inflicts on a man used to active life. This intensity of ennui, comparable only to that which some children suffer, is eased by morphia. The hours go by almost joyously. Misfortunes trouble no longer. One drifts on an enchanted sea. This death of ennui is the most efficient bribe which opium offers.

I dreamed a great deal during my long sickness, and not always unpleasantly. At one time, in my younger life, I read that Lord Coke kept a diary of his dreams, in the belief that from them he could learn more of his true character. Before I took morphia I followed his example for a time, dictating my dreams to my nurse; but I soon tired of this, as I observed that often in dreaming I could, as it were, examine my own mental state, and always to the effect of conclud-

ing that what I did, said, or thought was as I would have done under the like circumstances when awake, except that I rarely seemed to myself to laugh in dreams, whereas, when awake, life was full of humorous aspects to me. Under morphia I was capable of mirthful visions, which occurred to me while I was awake at night. Dreams are very personal things, and this may be why my father always insisted to me when a child that it was bad manners to relate dreams, and certainly nothing interests one less than to be told the dreams of another man. I had, however, two experiences in this matter which are so amusing and curious that I venture to relate them as additions to the rather grim literature of opium.

I had taken one night a grain of morphia, and then another like dose, and thereupon passed into a sweet sleep. In an hour I awoke and began to see things, chiefly scenes from the "Arabian Nights," and then, abruptly, the following:

I had been for some years, as I have said, in practice in a great city, and now I saw my little study with all its belongings set out clearly in the darkness of my chamber. A maid servant entered and told me that a patient wished to see me. I said, or seemed to say, "Ask him to walk in." Upon which the woman opened both leaves of the folding-door between me and my waiting-room. This excited my wonder until I saw enter with difficulty a man of enormous bulk. He looked at the chairs, and finally sat down with care on a lounge, remarking:

"At hotels I have to be careful; they put it in the bill."

The vision went on, and I apparently said, "What can I do for you?"

"As a gentleman," he returned, "I cannot go further without a warning. I want to consult you, but I cannot in justice do so until I say that whenever I mention a symptom to a doctor it leaves me and goes to him."

"Really!" I exclaimed, incredulously.

"Yes. They all tell me that I am a crank; that this is a peculiar delusion, and the like."

"Go on," I said. "It is easily tested."

As I replied I noticed that his eyes were singular, the iris and pupil being quite double the ordinary diameters. The color was a dead gray, and the organs in question had a malicious fixity of expression.

"Pray go on," I repeated. "Are you in earnest?"

"I have a severe pain in my back, about the lumbar region on the left."

Instantly I myself felt a sharp pain just in the part mentioned, and I put my hand to it, or seemed to, for the arms were still unable to move freely.

"Aha! I was right; you doctors are all skeptical."

"Nonsense," I returned. "This is not strange enough to convince a reasoning man."

"The last fellow said it was a coincidence."

"Go on."

"Oh, very well. I am blind in my left eye."

At once I covered my right eye, and knew that he was right. I was unable to see anything.

"That will do," said I, faintly. "Stop."

"Yes. You cannot say that I did not warn you. It may interest you to know that as I came up the street

I left eleven symptoms with different doctors. One was difficult to satisfy; he got an enlarged liver, emphysema of the left lung, and varicose veins. I have seen but one reasonable doctor, and it, or she (for the doctor was a woman), said she always carried away some of her patients' symptoms, and would have nothing to do with me."

At this he rose, and I also attempted to do the same, but found that my armchair rose with me.

"What horrible thing is this?" I said.

"I forgot!" he exclaimed. "How shall I ever forgive myself! Now it is too late. I ought to have told you that as my aches and ailments leave me to settle in the body of the doctor, so also does my flesh, which, as you see, is unduly great. A few days more and I shall have left the rest of my excess in Boston. There no one believes anything old, and everybody believes anything new."

"Please to go away," I said; and I saw him waddle slowly out of the room.

The notes of this queer vision I managed to make my nurse write for me the next morning. Its oddness to me consisted in the fact that it amused me as it passed before me, and that I appeared to be at the time watching myself, as if I, the watcher, were one, and I, the actor, another person—not a very rare state in ordinary dreams.

These opium visions were of a definiteness which is never found in the dreams of sleep, and were rarely unpleasant. I could not command their presence. For many nights I would sleep well under morphia, and then pass a night of entire wakefulness haunted

by spectacular scenes. I promised to limit myself to the telling of only two; both had some relation to things in which I had been especially interested. Thus I had once experimented with care on myself to learn how most safely to reduce an excess of fat; and my second vision was in some way the outcome of a paper I wrote as a student.

I was of a sudden in the laboratory of the foremost of American chemists, and had arranged an apparatus so that on one side of a piece of tanned rhinoceros-hide I placed bisulphid of carbon, and on the other an agent well known to my dream state, but, alas! lost to the memory of daylight. My chemical friend smiled blandly as I told him that osmotic currents would slowly form in the course of months, and, my bisulphid of carbon being very gradually decomposed, crystals of carbon, or, in other words, diamonds, would be formed on the surface of the membrane. Having arranged my apparatus, it was put into a safe. I remember to have felt the most profound interest, not unmixed with amusement, at what I did, and I was annoyed when the laboratory faded away and a Druidical procession appeared in a grove. At last I had a distinct sense of gratification as again the laboratory appeared, and my friend stood before the open safe. I carefully drew out the tray on which stood the dialyzer. On the top of the membrane were several dull-looking stones, one as large as a walnut. My friend took this up, and crossed the room. In a minute he came back, saying: "You have made seven hundred thousand dollars' worth of diamonds. This

lesser one is of perfect water; the large one is a little blue."

I said that I knew I should succeed.

"It will be very useful in the arts," returned my friend. "I shall like to have about two dozen of the size of a pigeon's egg to enable me to make certain studies in chemical physics."

Now this was pretty much what the man would have desired, and would have asked under like circumstances. The scientific aspect of the matter would for him have been the only one, and it did seem to me odd that, without act of will of which I was cognizant, he should thus speak through me with the simplicity and directness which are a part of his character. Again, it was characteristic of me that some of the moral developments of the affair should present themselves. However, without more comment, I will relate my further remembrance of it as it was written down next day.

I answered his desire by a promise that he should have what he wanted, and went on to say: "What shall we do? I may make ten millions in diamonds, and then cease, and never reveal the method; or I may at once publish it, in which case all the diamonds in the world become as glass, and multitudes of people are ruined. And what will the women say?"

"Some one must continue to make diamonds," said my friend. "There are numberless uses for them which their cost now forbids."

But I could not consent to make a fortune, sell my diamonds, and then render them valueless to those to whom I had sold them.

"It is a difficult problem," said he.

"It is an impossible one," said I; and here the vision ended in some wild cavern scene, for neither will nor wish on my part had power to detain a picture, nor to secure the continuance of one of these dramatic visions where I was the whole company and the whole audience.

II.

WAS a year in bed before I could walk, or even stand, but my recovery was then rapid and complete. Pain I knew by this time in a wonderful variety of forms, but of whatever it finally did of good or evil to me I shall say but little. The evil was immediate, the good remote or indirect. If any man wants to learn sympathetic charity, let him keep pain subdued for six months by morphia, and then make the experiment of giving up the drug. By this time he will have become irritable, nervous, and cowardly. The nerves, muffled, so to speak, by narcotics, will have grown to be not less sensitive, but acutely, abnormally capable of feeling pain, and of feeling as pain a multitude of things not usually competent to cause it. I did what I have known one other human being to do, and that a woman. After several efforts to get rid of my foe by degrees, I shut myself up in my room, and, declining to see any physician, fought it out alone and unaided. At the close of two weeks I could sleep without morphia, but of the torture of that fortnight I have even now scarce courage to think. The victory left me, as to my body, a wreck, but made me forever tender to those who are under the despotic rule of this and other

as hurtful habits. I learned also how much of character is a question of health, and this too has had for me its value in life.

At the close of two years I was well and as vigorous as ever, but the wound and its consequence left with me one other result for which I was not prepared. I took a growing dislike to the profession of which I had been proud, having looked forward to being enabled to apply myself wholly to the study of the science of medicine rather than to its general practice. I suppose that I could have conquered my feelings, and that in time they would have left me; but I had no need to make a fight, and as yet my power of self-government was not what it had been. I disliked most of all the idea of practising among disorders like my own. This I cannot understand, but I may say that patients who have grave chronic maladies which they know to be fatal are, as a rule, indisposed to hear of the sad needs of like cases among the poor; nor, if rich, do they especially incline to help these, or to provide for them in any way. I am, as I have said, a student of character, but this peculiarity has never been quite explicable to me, and that it has had noble exceptions only serves to emphasize the existence of the mass of facts which prove my point. I saw pretty soon that I was in no condition to make a struggle, and so gave it up for a time, and went abroad.

While in Europe I amused myself with a close study of the characteristics of the Slav, the Teutonic, and the Celtic races, and for this purpose lived much among all classes. Some of my conclusions are to be found in my volume on the "Influence of Language on Char-

acter," which is, of course, but a part of a larger subject. I am not wholly satisfied as yet with my method of treating this matter, but I am quite certain that if to-day France and Germany were suddenly and miraculously to interchange tongues, the two nations would shortly undergo some unlooked-for alterations. I have known several people whose superficial characteristics were quite different according as they spoke French or English, although they were as fluent in the one as in the other. I know of one woman who is common and ill-bred as an Englishwoman, but who, when she speaks French, which she knows well, is apparently well-mannered and rather attractive. Nor, as we reflect, does this seem altogether strange when we consider how much national character has to do with the evolution of language and how impossible exact translation is. I have heard a man say that to read or speak French made him feel gay, and that the effect of like uses of German was quieting.

The second part of my work on national characteristics was to have been on the relative conception and valuation of truth, and then of courage, among nations. I was interrupted in the study by a call home on a matter of business which involved a large amount of money and allowed of no delay.

On my return I found that a certain Western capitalist, a man already of vast fortune obtained by modern methods, had succeeded in depressing what are fantastically termed securities connected with a short railroad, and that a good deal of my means was likely to disappear in the process of adding a million or more to the hoards of a great gambler.

What was worse, my father, who had had charge of many trusts, had confidently invested certain excesses of income for the widow of a friend in the securities in question, and for years their rise in value had justified him. But now came a robber who, by a variety of methods, succeeded in injuring the road with the intention of buying it in at a low rate as a bankrupt concern. In the case just mentioned a sick woman and two children relied largely on the income hitherto coming to them with regularity, and I felt that, as regards these victims, I must make good their losses. I was told by business men that this was absurd; that my father had acted in good faith and within the law; that it was no one's fault that their sources of income had failed these people.

It became more and more clear to me on my way home that I was to be a serious loser, and I went at once to consult a friend of whom I shall have, by and by, more to say. When I entered his office, Frederick Vincent was talking with Clayborne, another friend of both of us, and whom I had not met since my recent return. Clayborne looked like a giant out of business. A tall, stalwart man, clumsily strong, he stooped a little, and carried off but ill his unusual stature. To shake hands with this huge creature was a serious matter. He was innocently given to crushing the hand one confided to his grip in a fashion which not insignificantly reminded one of the way in which he was apt to deal with the emotions or prejudices even of those he loved the best.

"I have been to see you both," I said, "and did see Mrs. Vincent."

It was pleasant to feel sure how glad these men were to welcome me. As I explained the reason for my sudden return Vincent's face took on that look of grave intensity of attention which so inspired confidence in his advice. The large ruggedness of Clayborne's features underwent no change, but he, too, set himself to listen, and now and then made a note.

"Well," I said, after fully stating the situation, "it is my good fortune to have found you together. I come prepared to take whatever counsel you may give. Does the law offer me any chance, Vincent?"

"You might as well go to law with a cyclone," growled Clayborne.

"No," said Vincent; "I think we might beat him in time; but it would be costly, might take two years or more, and, frankly, my dear Owen, I do not think you could stand it. Commercial men have no idea what a torture business—complicated business—may become to—"

"To one like me, Fred? You are right, quite right. I could not stand it."

"I would not go to law," continued Vincent, "and I see no other way out, except to sell and accept the loss."

"Transfer your interest to me," said Clayborne, "and let me fight it for you; I shall enjoy the row. It won't hurt me."

"No; I cannot do that."

"And what else will you do?"

"I must go West, and look into the state of the road. If it seem hopeless, I shall sell out and make good the losses of the woman I spoke of."

"Nonsense!" exclaimed Clayborne.

Vincent said nothing.

"Do tell the boy not to make an ass of himself," said Clayborne, who was, I should have said, by many years our senior.

Vincent smiled. "In a year or two, you, under like circumstances, would do the same as Owen. Your moral mill grinds slowly, my friend, but I have observed that it is pretty sure at last."

"But no man's conscience—not the most scrupulous—"

"Pardon me, Clayborne," interrupted Vincent; "it is not a case of conscience or of honesty."

"And of what then?"

"Men used to call it honor," said Vincent, gently, without reproach or cynicism in his manner.

"Confound it!" said Clayborne, slowly rising. "The note is above my moral gamut. I am like the people who cannot hear the squeak of a mouse."

"Nevertheless, Owen is right."

After this I went away to my hotel, reflecting as I walked along on the possible character of my robber. Here was a man with over-much who wanted more. Was this avarice, or was it due to the pleasure he found in a game played without scruple? A famous burglar once told me that it was largely the excitement and the immense obstacles in the way which made him a plunderer of safes. Perhaps my foe had a certain joy in the complexity of the game of destruction; yet it must have been also that he loved mere money, because no one ever heard of his having suddenly restored a road to its ruined owners, as one sets

up tenpins it has been a pleasure successfully to bowl over. Had he never been threatened? Did he fear no wild justice, the outcome of the agony or madness of some one who saw wife and children beggared and himself too old or too ill to renew the fierce battle of life? My robber financier must have the courage of his guilt or lack predictive imagination.

Meanwhile the process of ruin went on, and, quite helpless, I resolved at once to carry out my plan of investigation. Accordingly I went straight to the great Western city which was one terminus of the road in question. A few days made plain to me how rapidly my bandit had matured his plans.

On my arrival in L—— I found two letters. One, from Vincent, said:

I send you a blank check. You must not be incommoded by this scoundrel, or let this trouble break up your life plan. I shall leave you in my will the amount you draw, and you can then repay my estate. Anne and I have talked it over

The other was from Clayborne.

Dear Owen: It is immensely pleasant to be able to help a man make a fool of himself. If you do not let me pay that woman I will give the money to a homeopathic hospital. You may choose as to which folly I shall commit.

Yours, C——.

I said to myself, these are some of the sweet uses of adversity. So, having made up my mind to accept the loss, and having taken my ticket for the homeward journey, I went out quite at rest in mind to wander in L—— for the hour or two yet left to me. Pausing in the street to ask of an elderly man a light for my

cigar, I inquired the name of the owner of a huge house at the corner. The man replied, "Why, that 's Xerxes Z——'s. Guess you 're a stranger. I knowed him when he was a boy; blacked my boots many a time. Wonder what he 'd take to black 'em now?" Surprised to hear thus the name of my foe, I went on; but the house attracted me, and presently I turned back. Then I crossed over, and just at that moment the door was opened by a rather frowzy maid. A sudden impulse seized me. I would see this man if he were at home, and if he were not I would go away, and accept tranquilly the misfortune his avarice had created for me. The woman said Mr. Z—— was at home, and showed me through an unfurnished hall into the parlor. The house was an old one with open grates in which blazed fierce anthracite fires. The furniture was ugly but not extravagant.

I had no plan in mind. I would at least learn what manner of creature this was, and have the poor comfort before I left of telling him what the world of the honest thought of him and his ways.

As a preliminary to our interview, I glanced about me hastily. Several large Swiss landscapes adorned the walls, and there was also an excellent oil-painting of a man in a red shirt casting for trout beside a quiet pool. Near it was a clever sketch of the same sturdy person caressing a beautiful setter. On a marble center-table were piled a few books: a volume of American scenery, Bryant, Longfellow, and Tupper, all with a certain stiffness of back symptomatic of lack of use. One, gorgeously bound, was "Travels in the Holy Land," a gift from the Rev. P. Y. to Xerxes Z., Esq.

A volume on the "Education of the Young," by the same to the same. Also memoir of "Travels in Strange Lands," affectionately and gratefully dedicated to X. Z., by his pastor, P. Y. My knowledge was accumulating. In the darkened back parlor was a full length of the fisherman by a great English artist. It looked as if the painter had found pleasure in labeling the visage with his own opinion of the sitter. I wondered at the courage, or the ignorance, which could accept such a vivid commentary; but, as I have said, it was rather too dark to see well this or other portraits, and, observing a single square green volume on the table, I walked back with it to the lighter room, and stood with wonder looking over its few pages. It was made up of old pamphlets containing chess problems, and at the close was an account, written in 1760, of the famous automaton chess-player. On the fly-leaf was the autograph of Von Kempelen, the inventor.

As I looked over the queer little book, puzzled and interested, and knowing, too, something of the fate of the great and really historical figure which had played with Maria Theresa, Frederick the Great, and Napoleon, I heard a heavy footfall, and my host entered—a man tall and broad, with ruddy, coarse, and large features borne on a head which was carried well back and up.

I said, "Mr. X. Z., I presume? And first, before we talk, let me replace this book which I brought from the back room. As a chess-player it interested me."

"All right," he said, and sat down while I disposed of the book, and came back to my host, who was still seated.

"Set down," he said. "What is it you want? If you 're a reporter, my secretary will attend to you."

"No; I am not a reporter. To go at once to the mark, I want a half-hour's talk with you."

"You can't have it unless it interests me. What 's it about?"

"About the P. L. and C. Railroad."

"Oh, yes; go ahead. That is inter*est*ing. Papers say I 'm whittlin' it up to buy the chips low."

"Are you not?"

"Well, you are a cool hand. What 's in all this? Who sent you?"

"I am a considerable owner of the stock and bonds," I said, "and, as I see that these are tumbling pretty fast, and observe that you have diverted all the natural coal and goods traffic to a longer loop line, and that some one is shoveling the stock out in heaps, I concluded that you are the man who, having organized arrangements to injure my little road, will step in some day and secure the property of myself and others."

I supposed that he would be angry. Not at all. He slowly stroked his long grizzled beard, smiled as I went on, and as I ended said:

"Is that all?"

"No; not quite. I want your advice as to what I shall do."

"Suppose that I tell you to go to the devil?"

"But you will not, or you would have done so at once. I promised to interest you, and you are interested, and, besides, it would be like — well — I could n't go there, because I am there now."

"There? Oh, I see. I am the devil, am I, and you want advice? Sell out."

"I cannot afford to do that. That is diabolical advice."

"Well, hold on."

"That means almost total loss. You are advising me from your point of view; reverse it, and take mine, and then, with what you know, say do this or that. I shall do as you say."

"Oh, will you? I won't do it; it ain't business. Mind, I ain't said I 'm in this thing at all. By George! my son Peter 's in the same boat as you. He wants advice too. He thinks he 's clever. Well—I advised him, I did. I give him high-class advice. He was grateful, that boy. Hope it 'll last. Are n't we gettin' off the track?"

"Yes; I 'm sorry for Peter. Of course you must keep up financial discipline."

"That 's good. I 'll tell Peter that financial discipline must be kep' up in one's own family circle."

"And now, as you have admitted to being in this scheme—"

"I—I did—did I?"

"Yes; you rose to my third fly."

"Look here, I won't stand this. Suppose I am in it? Suppose I am not in it?"

"But you not only rose to my fly, you took it too. You 're hooked. Once you are in an affair you go through. You began to advise me, and it is not in your character to fail. Advice is what you yourself, with your knowledge and in like circumstances, would accept. You say, hold on. I cannot. You are tri-

fling, and that is not your nature. You might have said, I will not advise. I should have taken that, and left; but now you are pledged to find me a way out, and a safe way. You are hooked, and it is time I reeled you in. Three runs are enough."

My host rose up, and set two heavy paws on the table behind which I sat. He looked for all the world like some strong plantigrade beast of the grizzly type. For a moment he regarded me with curiosity, and then broke into a roar of laughter which shook the bulky chandelier-pendants above us. I remained tranquil. At last he said:

"Who 's been a-blowin' to you about me?"

"No one."

"Oh, come now. I rose to the fly, did I?"

"Yes; it looked new to you, and up you came. Fatal curiosity."

"Oh, it is all very well to compare me to a trout, but no man was ever took that simple. I 'd like to have old Phil Sleeper with a hook in his gills and a long line and quick water and a multiplyin' reel— hang him."

"I am not Phil Sleeper. The case is reversed."

"Is it? Why, you must be a fisherman yourself. Come here and see this picture. I had Simmons do that. It is just at the outlet of Moosehead. I 'm fast to a cast of eight pounds — one five, one three. Ever tie your own flies?"

"Sometimes."

"This morning, I suppose?"

"Yes."

"Rather curious, is n't it, that two men as different

as you and me should like the same sort of things—fly-fishin', chess?"

"And how are we different?" I said, much amused.

"You 're the queerest man I ever saw—a whole menagerie. By the time you 're ten years older you won't have a dollar. How 's that for a guess?"

"Not a bad one. And here is one for you. Some day you will go to bits. I see it in your face."

"Why, I 've been worth millions three times, and not a cent next day. Safe this time; got it solid."

"I 'm not sure. One more smash, and your nervous system won't stand it. What advice have you? You have wasted quite time enough. Three long runs, sulked a little, two or three dangerous jumps. Now I propose to reel in. You like a man who can outwit you; he is the only thing you esteem on earth."

"That 's so. Tell you what I 'll do. If you can beat me one game at chess I 'll take your stock at par."

"And bonds?"

"Yes; last offer."

"I 'll do it," I said.

"Then you 're done for, young man. Come along. Who riz to the fly this time?"

I followed him into a small room, bare of furniture except a desk, chess-table, and spittoons. I was looked upon as a good second-rate among our local players, and had a pretty clear idea that I should win. He chuckled as we went in, and, sitting down, arranged the board. He won the move, and opened with the famous but little-known Catapult gambit. I replied with Herr Strombalovsky's defense, and the game went on. I soon saw that he was quite my equal. Pres-

ently, having a little view ahead, and his queen being in trouble, I said, "Did you ever see Maelzel's automaton?"

"Never," he returned, abstractedly.

"It used to be in Philadelphia; was burned up; said 'check' in its last moments. Queer that, was it not?"

"Oh, look here, there 's a lot of money in this game. If you think —"

I had accustomed myself to talk to a by-stander while playing chess, because I found that constant attention never helped me, and that a few moments of intense concentration between moves got the best results out of my chess capacities. I thought a moment, and castled the king. This altered the situation, and while he studiously contemplated the game I went on talking.

"I have an old Dutch treatise on chess. There is one splendid gambit. Never been published. You begin with the king castle's pawn."

"Nonsense! Oh, look here," he said, "I don't believe in new gambits. What is it, anyway? You wait till we 're done. Bet you five hundred dollars it is n't new."

Then he moved a knight.

"Check," said I. "I have myself two books of ends of games belonging to Von Kempelen." He made no answer, but moved a bishop to guard the king.

"Check," said I.

"Oh, that 's your talk. It 's against the rules."

"Nonsense! This is *a* game of chess, not *the* game. Check again."

"Ever kill a salmon?" I added.

"No; that must be fun."

"There is a boss salmon in the Cascapedia, weighs about ninety pounds. They say he has been hooked at least six dozen times. His mouth is so full of flies and leaders it looks like a beard. They call him the governor-general."

"Oh, bother!" And he moved a pawn.

"Check."

"Euchred," he said. "I give up. It 's sure mate in three moves. I give up."

"No; we must play it out. A given game is not won. You would turn around and say I had not beaten you, and decline to pay the forfeit."

"That 's just what I meant to do, my boy. I wish Peter was like you. He believes every word I say."

"Check—mate," said I.

"I 've lost. What possessed me? You just write to Falls & Sons. They 'll settle. Want it in writing?"

"I? No. Of course not. You are free to pay or not. I pestered you with talk. It was hardly fair. Pay or not, as you like. I did not in any honest sense win."

"Stuff and nonsense. Do you suppose, sir, I don't keep my engagements? I don't guess you came here to insult me."

"No; hardly. I really came because I was curious to see what manner of man you were."

"Like going to a menagerie show. Well, you 've seen it, and got your money back too; but don't you go and buy a lot more stock now. It 's awful low. How much am I in for this gamble?"

I named the amounts; he noted them, rose, and as we went out into the hall said, "Let me see those ends of games."

"I will send you the books. Pray keep them."

"And look here—I never had a better mornin' in my life; but don't you go and tell everybody, and put it in the papers. What 's your address? I 'll send you the Wall street trout-fly. Peter calls him the bull."

At the door I said, "By the way, I never told you my name."

"That 's so!" And he took my card.

"Well, by George! you 're a doctor. That 's the very queerest thing I ever did know. Why, I never knew a doctor ever knew anything—his own business, or any one else's. How Peter would laugh. But he won't next Monday. Good mornin', Doctor North. Come in again and give me my revenge."

As I turned to go he stopped me. "You said I did n't look well—"

"Yes; I said that. It is something, I cannot tell what, about your eyes—"

"Hum! come back and go over me a bit. I ain't felt well of late, that 's a fact. And I can't tell the doctors here. Don't trust 'em." I went in again, and finally remained in the city overnight to complete my study of his case.

"Well," he said at last, "what 's wrong with my works? Not much margin, eh?"

"You have a disease of the kidneys—"

"Fatal? Mind, I don't skeer easy. Yes, or no? Out with it."

"Yes; but with care you may live many years."

"How many?"

"I do not know. I will write out my advice for you in full."

"Good. And I may trust you not to let it get into the papers. It would be worth a lot of money to somebody."

"You are safe with me."

"I believe you. You have done me a big service. What 's your fee?"

"It is large."

"I don't care. What is it?"

"My fee is that you put that road back where it was a year ago."

"Darned if I do. And take your stock too? No, sir."

"I have reflected. I won't take the money for it. I have told you my fee. Good morning."

"I 'll do it. No man can say Xerxes Z—— don't pay his debts. Five years? Ten? How long have I got? You 'll have to take care of me. I 'll send my private car for you every month."

"I will do it. There is even a chance, a small one, of recovery."

"Is that so? Hold on to your stock; buy more; it 's pretty low. And come and dine here to-day."

"No; I cannot. I must go. Good-by."

"Well, buy soon. Don't you forget, and hold your tongue, too. It 's the biggest bill I ever paid. You 're not a cheap doctor."

XERXES was as good as his word, but I bought no more of the stock. In a year or two I was better off

than before. Nevertheless, I did not appear to myself well in this transaction. I had used the robber's methods to overcome the robber. It was true that I had estimated correctly the character of Mr. X. Z., but to meet the demands of the situation I had acted against my own habitual ways. To this day the first part of that little affair sits like a toad in one corner of my mind and sneers at me. It is the one thing I have never told Vincent. I merely said to him on my return that I was resolved to wait, and have been much applauded for my sagacity. Also, I am free to admit that I did pull the great financier through his physical difficulties. He lived to do untold mischief. I was once standing on a pier in London when a thief, sharply pursued, in trying to jump into a wherry, fell overboard. He sank twice, when in dashed a huge Newfoundland and towed the unconscious rascal ashore, where he was promptly seized by the police. For my part, the behavior of that dog interested me. He shook himself, and settled down in the sun on the pier with a look of distinct self-gratulation at his feat. The morals of the drowning man did not concern him. I have often thought about that dog.

III.

I WAS now again at ease as to the future, and without occupation. A man of some thirty-six years of age, I was master of three languages, well read in a general way, and, as may have been seen, a practised and interested observer of my fellow men. Moreover, I had had the experience of a long illness, and found, therefore, renewed pleasure in outdoor life as well as in a myriad of things which are to be seen in field and wood, and air and water. Mere science had in it for me little that I liked, and it was clear to me that only in my own profession was there what I desired—a combination of ever-changing science, and its constant applications to medicine as an art.

Having no wish to increase my fortune, I took chiefly to consulting practice, declining cases at will, and was lucky enough to obtain a good hospital position.

Contented with my daily work, and the constant problems it set before intelligent curiosity, I lived at tranquil ease, my friends making for me a large part of the pleasure of life. Some of them I loved for groups of moral qualities, some for the mental food with which they stimulated me. There were others who were dear because they found something in me to

like and to trust and to use, and who themselves were not in any way remarkably attractive except for having a notable capacity to love. Undoubtedly there are folks whom one loves as one does some quite useless pleasant dog. From all of which it may be clear that I had many friends. Some of them were always interesting, and this is rare—although I may as well confess here that more people have interest for me than is the case with educated men in general. Even those who are generally looked upon as commonplace often find a warm corner at the hearth-side of my heart. When friends die or drift away, I like to fill their places, and hope when life ends to find the ranks as full as in the mid-flow of existence. Mrs. Vincent says that I collect friends as a naturalist does flowers. The only rational limit I can set to an increase of the number of those whom one qualifies as friends lies in the fact that one must contribute more or less in the way of time, letters, and pleasant service. Some need little; others insist on constancy of relation—for there are genera and species in friendship. Of one of them, Vincent, already mentioned, I should feel as sure if we were parted for half a life. He was of the rare men who have intellectual apprehensions so swift as to seem instinctive. While in some matter of social difficulty, or of tangled business, I should have slowly reasoned out my conclusion, he attained the same result apparently without effort, and yet could afterward give you his reasons. He was a man too sensitively reserved to admit many to his friendship, too silent as to his charities to be known to the world as generous. His character was indeed throughout the more beauti-

ful for the modesty which hid its values. He was one of the few I ever knew who had the art of giving, even money, with graciousness. Also, he was master of himself, body and mind. To me he seemed the ideal of modern common sense, with ever a present possibility of chivalric action carried to the verge of the quixotic. Of this man, in company with a sculptor, now very famous, and a scholar, also of the upper rank, and already mentioned, I saw much. Among them Frederick Vincent attracted me most. While these others had attained in life all, or nearly all, of what their capabilities made possible, he alone appeared to me never to reach the success which seemed within the command of his qualities. When I came to know that it was his frail physical state which set limits to a boundless ambition, I loved him more than ever, because there was never on his part the least unmanly repining. In fact, life—active life—was only possible to him on condition that he lived with care and spent much time out of doors.

One evening we met, as was often the case, at my own rooms. Three of us being bachelors and only Vincent married, these meetings were easily and often possible.

Detained by a consultation, I came in late to find two of my three friends gathered about the blazing hickory logs of my study hearth. The third, Clayborne, was as usual wandering about, now along the coast of my bookcases, now knocking against chair or table, a great drifting hulk of a man.

"And what have you been discussing?" I said.

"We began," said Vincent, "with a long screed from St. Clair. He is laughing at Mrs. B—— for having

her girls trained by a drill-sergeant to have flat backs —like West Point cadets. He insists that no antique statue of woman is erect, and he declares that they all droop like flowers."

"It was n't a fertile text," said Clayborne, "and we soon got through with it. There is one comfort about that boy St. Clair's futilities of speech. If he talks often he does n't talk long at a time."

"Thanks," said St. Clair. "It was Clayborne who digressed; I could have gone on for an hour about the flat backs of what they call 'women' in these days. I wonder would Eve know her modern sisters. Clayborne went off for an unbroken half-hour on the ancients as realists. He thinks the Laocoon the finest thing in plastic art, old or new. He meant, I fancy, to start on that as a text, but the text got in only at the end of the sermon. Realism—I loathe the word, and he calls the Laocoon realistic."

"I do."

"What, to carve a snake as a round rope, and to give a constrictor serpent fangs? Any boy knows better than that."

"Those snakes have no fangs," returned Clayborne.

"Yes, they have," I said; "and in the upper jaw, in the right place, and one on each side."

"I don't believe it," said Clayborne.

"And still it is so," returned St. Clair. "Moreover, Clayborne, although the old sculptors were fond of carving serpents, I never saw another example of the venomous fanged snake in any art museum."

"And snakes are not round?" said Clayborne, appealing to me.

"No; a section of a snake in motion or constricting would be like a half moon, and flattened on the belly side."

"I give up," said the scholar. "I am always ready to yield to real knowledge; but—"

"Oh, come now!" cried St. Clair. "When you do eat your humble-pie don't growl because it gives you a mental colic."

"I am not sure about it yet," urged Clayborne. "However, we got off next on to weariness, or rather fatigue of mind. Vincent happened to say that his head was tired—his brain, I mean. St. Clair and I can't understand what that means. We do agree now and then."

"Then," said St. Clair, "we remembered what some one has said, that scholars who have lived much in Europe believe work to be possible there at less cost to one's nervous system than in our climate."

"I said that was absurd," said Clayborne. "So much thought, so much product, so much tissue wasted."

"Try to climb in our summer climate, and on a Swiss mountain," returned Vincent, "and see whether or not more effort is needed here. It seems to me that the same may be true as to the use of the mind."

"I think that a fair reply," I said. "But also, to generalize, I fancy that any given thousand Americans do more work in a year than as many of a like group of English, we may say."

"As to this whole question," said Clayborne, "I am a bad witness. I cannot understand what a man means when he says his brain is tired."

"You must have strained it badly to know," I returned. "Sense of fatigue as referred to the brain, and not merely to eye, hand, or back, is hardly a normal sensation."

"I wonder is it wholly modern," remarked Vincent; "and did we Yankees really invent neurasthenia?"

"If I had Sydenham here," I replied, "I would show you what that master in medicine said of overwork, and the consequences, in Charles II.'s time. While I am sure we have only too many breakdowns from excesses in work, and above all from anxiety with work, I know well enough that since we discovered, described, and named the condition of nervous exhaustion it has been found to exist everywhere in Europe."

"And the remedy?" said St. Clair, who had merely listened.

"Turn beast," cried Clayborne. "Who ever saw a horse with neurasthenia?"

"Go back to nature, I suppose," said St. Clair. "Live out of doors. Turn cowboy. Get near the soil again. Imagine a neurasthenic Sioux chief."

"The remedy would destroy me," said Clayborne. "I once camped out with Owen. Never was man so wretched. My own remedy would be change of occupation for a time. Some hobby is valuable. If I weary of my work I simply go and fuss over my coins. There is Vincent; why does n't he write a play when he is tired, or hunt butterflies?"

Vincent smiled, but made no reply. I well knew why. His fund of physical energy barely sufficed for the week's work, and left him no available reserve.

"Once," I said, "a lawyer or a doctor could not af-

ford to go against the public opinion which decreed that he could not be anything else but mere lawyer or doctor. Now, in our great towns at least, these limitations are passing away. We have more freedom, and certainly what Clayborne says is true: one can't run away always, and a little canter on a hobby of literature, science, or art is usually possible."

"What is too often wanting to the tired man," said Vincent, quite sadly, "is the energy to saddle and bridle and mount his hobby. Rest is what I want. I stay in bed of a Sunday."

"It is rather odd," said St. Clair, who was apt to be discursive, "that in literature the doctor so often appears. There are Rabelais, Keats, Goldsmith, Holmes, Akenside, and more, if one chose to think them over. But among notable poets who have had legal training one recalls only Goethe."

"I think that is true," remarked Clayborne, who, as was common with him, was still moving about, and now and then glancing at a book on my shelves.

"But no great poet," urged St. Clair, "ever could be long or seriously anything else. None of those men continued to be doctors. Akenside one need hardly consider. Poetry is an inexorable mistress."

"I have often wondered," said Vincent, "what forms of pursuit give on the whole the largest bounty in the way of happiness."

"The naturalist's, I should say," I returned.

"The artist's," cried St. Clair. "I am supremely happy."

"And you?" said Clayborne to me.

"My life contents me," I said. "Yes; I am happy

in my work. It admits of so much intellectual variety, and there is too the persistent daily work which, like a great fly-wheel, steadies all the machinery of life."

"I wish," said Vincent, "I could get inside of any other man's life."

"It would not explain or make easier your own life," said Clayborne. "After all, joyousness is a question of temperament. But, over and above that, there is something to be said as to the pleasurable quality of men's pursuits."

"Are poets happy as a rule?"

"No," returned St. Clair; "they are the very bondsmen of common sense, and that is always unpleasant in its influence. They see too clearly to be happy, and feel too acutely."

"Stuff!" cried Clayborne. "The rule would work both ways. The trouble is that most of them were fools and suffered for their nonsense. The best of brains cannot always shut the door on folly. If a man enjoys nature too much to go indoors when it rains—morally or physically rains—need he growl at the consequences?"

"And yet the notion," I returned, "that poets, artists, and men of science are wanting in every-day common business sense appears to me negatived by the lives of many. Really, the great poets and foremost men of science are always variously capable. They fail in business matters merely because they care more for other things. Whenever they have been forced to conduct affairs they have shown no want of capacity. There is Goethe again, and Shakspere, and Spenser,

and Emerson, and in science the noble list of men who have managed the vast Smithsonian business."

"How we drift in our talk," said Clayborne. "I think you may be correct. But let me go back and recall the talk to—"

"Recall it!" interrupted Vincent. "You can't anchor a conversation. It is only when it drifts that I like it. Your serious talkers are too tiresome. How very few good things they say. How often they must re-say them. Look at any table-talk, even Coleridge's. Imagine these things said to you gravely. Nobody talks that way now; no one should. Think of the long, dull fuses that fizzed gently between their brilliant firecrackers. These professors of conversation are things of the past. As a rule, for good talk, you must have people used to talk and to listen. They must want to amuse and be amused. You can't have good talk without good manners. For my part, I would rather take my chance at table beside some woman of the world than beside most of the literary or scientific folks I have known."

There was silence for a moment while St. Clair rose and filled a pipe, saying as he dropped the match, "That is the reason why the forests are so agreeable."

"If you want to destroy conversation toss a conundrum into it," cried Clayborne. He detested lack of clearness in verse, prose, or the talk of man.

St. Clair started up. "And you call that a conundrum? Do you know any one with the breeding or manners of a pine tree; and who talks better?"

Vincent looked up at our poet-sculptor with a smile which for a certain dignity and sweetness I never saw

the like of. "My manners are better and my talk more amusing," he cried, laughing. "What stuff is all this modern nonsense about the relation of man to nature! It is all manufacture, all conventional. I love the pleasant noises of trees, and wind, and waters. I like them as a child likes music—in a vague way.

> I am it, and it is me,
> Earth and water, air and sea;
> I am them, and they are me.
> In my soul the poplar shivers,
> In my heart the ash tree quivers,
> And a philosophical search
> Readeth anguish in the birch."

We all laughed and laughed again, except St. Clair.

"Does it seem to you really so absurd," he said, "that the man and the tree should have mysterious relationships? Once they were both atoms somewhere in the slime of what you call chaos." Our friend was just now wildly, delightedly puzzled over the theories of evolution. "This unity of original product explains to me a good deal," he added.

"Does it?" said Vincent.

> "The sun and moon shall fall a-main
> Like sower's seeds into his brain,
> There quickened, to be born again."

St. Clair was now really vexed. He had a keen sense of humor, but also a childlike sense of annoyance when it was used against him. "It is easy," he cried, "to spoil a man's dreams, to bruise his ideals."

"Oh," exclaimed Vincent, "that is true, and you may be right. The relation of nature and its voices to

man—not to all men—may be like the relations of music to some. I say it as a verity because I have no such relation to music. I have seen my wife with tears in her eyes, or light of joy in her face, when L—— played Beethoven. It was a closed door to me. I sat and wondered at her passionate pleasure. It was to me as are to you the murmurs of brooks, the wind in the pines. I marvel at it. I am like the beggar on the door-step. I see the house lighted up; I hear merriment within. It is not of my world; I gather up my rags, and go on."

"There is no real music in nature," said Clayborne; "really none, and rhythm too is of purely human begetting. Emerson guesses at the heart-pulse as its origin. Holmes says the easier rimes are born of the accidental length of respiration."

"Do you suppose," said I, "that verse is ever a birth-gift? Music may be, as it seems to me. Some idiots can sing distinctly. I wonder if many of the great poets had in very early childhood the tendency to rime or to speak rhythmically. Apart from its intellectual aspects, poetry does seem to me like a distinct means of expression, almost a distinct language, easy for some, impossible for others."

"There is the puzzle," said Vincent. "You can't separate the form-power from the informing intellectual capacity in poetry. The greatest poets are always the greatest masters of verse; the lesser ones may be melodious, but are never capable of the higher music of verse. The architects of thought are the master builders. Then, too, it is a curiously dominative temperament. I never shall believe there was ever a

'mute Milton.' Perhaps great creative musical power is as despotic in its order to the man to utter himself. What I envy either is the creative act. They must enjoy the making of a poem or a sonata with an intensity past our conception."

"And now I am out of my depth," said Clayborne.

"I think," said I, "that the pleasure of some revolutionizing discovery must be the equal of any joy which either poetic or musical creativeness affords. To know of a sudden some far-reaching law, some fact hidden in solar space, or time-buried; to come on its conception abruptly, as between two breaths—well, I would as gladly experience that as to have written 'Comus.'"

"Not I," said St. Clair.

"Nor I," said Vincent; "but, like Clayborne, I have not imagination enough to enable me to conceive of either as possible. I am quite sure that as yet the psychical share of imagination in great material discovery has not been fully appreciated. In Goethe's scientific work it shows remarkably. The other side is seen in his poetry, and in Dante."

"How?" cried St. Clair.

"You, at least, ought to know. Talk about glory and rewards for these men of many crystalline facets, each with its light and colors. They must needs be glory and joy enough to themselves."

"It is an awfully human fact," I observed, "that they all craved recognition."

"And when," returned Clayborne, "we see how little most men can do, the absence of limitations in some men of genius appears incredible. I suppose none of

them equaled Da Vinci in the wonderful variety of gifts—painter, sculptor, poet, architect, hydraulic engineer, anatomist, physiologist. What a life! One marvels most at the memory of a man like that. It must have been perfect."

We all laughed; the speaker was a wonder of memorial strength. He went on, "Oh, I remember well enough; but—my last word makes me ask if there ever was a man with an absolutely perfect memory."

"That is rather droll," said I, "because I was consulted yesterday by a queer fellow who says that his memory is too good. In a day or two he is to bring me a written statement of his case. If you like I will read it to you the first time chance brings us together."

"I should like to hear it," returned Vincent. "Nothing seems to me more improbable."

As they went away, he lingered. "I wish," he said, "you would do for me as you some time ago said you would, and let me see the inside of a doctor's life. I mean as much of it as one can see. We have talked it over so often."

"That is in part possible," I returned. "Meet me to-morrow. It is Sunday. I am due at St. Ann's Hospital at eleven."

"Agreed," he said, and left me.

IV.

VINCENT was waiting for me next day in the manager's room of the hospital. I said to him, "If you are to excite no remark, look as wise as nature allows, and let me call you doctor."

He nodded, and followed me. At the head of the stairs a young resident physician met us. He carried my case-book, a stethoscope, and a percussion-hammer. The walls, like the floors, were of exquisite cleanliness, and unornamented save by portraits of physicians who had gone their rounds for years in these wards, and at last followed their many patients out of the world.

The young doctor, a favorite of mine, opened a door, pausing a moment to say, "Joe is worse, sir."

"And Johnson?"

"Oh, better; much better."

I said to Vincent: "My young friend and I differed a little as to a case. It looks now as though he were right." The young man glanced up flushed and glad, and we went into the ward.

Here were some twenty beds, all full. Beside each was a little table, and, now, neatly tucked back, clean fly-nets, it being near to summer. The floor was of

spotless boards; the walls were of a pleasant gray tone, and there was ample light, and, of course, abundant air, so that the atmosphere was without odor. Four neat, white-capped, white-aproned young women, their arms covered with protecting white over-sleeves, moved to and fro noiselessly. An older woman came up to us, smiling. I presented her to my doctor.

"I like my head nurse to make the round with me," said I. "Come, and ask what questions you please, doctor. I hope not to tire you; my Sunday visits here are long ones. Here is a case not clear to me; perhaps you can help us." Vincent preserved a perfect gravity.

"How are you, John?" I said. A great stalwart lumberman lay stretched out in bed his full six feet two.

"Look at his face," I said in an undertone.

"I am no better, sir, and I won't never be."

"A case of pneumonia, doctor, and not a bad one. He is on the way to health: no pain; no cough; pulse good; won't eat; thinks he will die. What would you do for him, Doctor Vincent?"

He replied without hesitation, and to my surprise, "Pitch a tent; put him out in the sun; give him a penknife and a shingle." The man looked up, a quick response in his face.

"Couldn't we manage it?" I said to my young aid. "I will speak to the steward."

"I hate," said I aside to Vincent, "to see a man bent on dying. They sometimes go unaccountably to death. I once saw in Paris a man from whom Roux

had removed a small tumor of no moment. The man said that he would die, and the old surgeon remarked to us that he did not like that. The patient was dead in two days, and no man could tell then, or on examination, what killed him."

"Did you ever," said Vincent, "see a man die because he willed to?"

"No," I replied; "nor escape death by mere decision not to die. The resolution to do whatever is needful to get well, the belief in its possibility, help men; that is all. I once heard a man with cholera—a sturdy mechanic—declare that he did not mean to die, and would not. He tried to make himself think he must get well. The thing was most painful."

"And he died?" said the nurse.

"Yes; he died."

In the next bed a young carpenter lay ill. He had the clearly cut American features, neat mustache, and Vandyke beard so much worn by his class.

"How are you, Joe?" I said.

"Oh, better; a lot better."

I went over his case with care. "Listen here," I said to Vincent. My friend bent down awkwardly, listened a moment, and then followed me away.

"What was that I heard like a rattle?"

"Yes, a death-rattle—a sentence of death in clear language," I answered.

"It is strange to have a man's lungs talk to one. It is a language. Shall you tell him?"

"Not unless he asks me. I have told his relatives."

"And will he ask?"

"Probably. A hundred years hence or sooner we

will cure such cases. I hate these inevitables in medicine—cancer, consumption. Come, here is something better."

"Good morning," I said to a pale, sallow creature in the next bed but one. He shook his head. I took a slate off his bed, and wrote, "How are you?"

"Oh, better," he said. "I understood twice yesterday. Then it went."

"Back better too? Have you books enough?" I wrote.

Vincent lifted one from his table; it was a harrowing tale of piracy—poor trash.

"I will send him 'The Three Musketeers,' if you will let me," said my friend.

I went on: "He is word-deaf. He hears but cannot interpret. The connecting nerve-threads between word-memory (I mean ideas gotten by hearing) and his receptive organs are broken, but he has word-vision; words which he reads are still usefully dealt with by the mind. He fell a hundred feet from a scaffold and broke his back. He is going to recover. It is curious that he has no memory of the events which preceded his fall for two hours. It seems as if time were needed to fix the records of memory. I have seen this often. Some physical shock interferes with the permanence of the delicate impression made on the brain-cells. It is like interrupting the fixation of a photo picture. It is so in battle. The hurry of emotions, the swiftness of the march of events, the mad fury of fight, have a like effect, and hence with the coolest the memory of the details of a battle are apt to be imperfect. But let one of these men be wounded

so as to make him a passive spectator, and thenceforward he remembers all that goes on."

"I wonder," said Vincent, "if death, too, is like the shock of a fall, and crushes out all remembrance of the past?"

My young resident doctor looked up at him with a quick glance of curiosity, and said, "Do you recall, Dr. North, that girl we had here last year who forgot only people, and ceased to know even her lover?"

"Yes; and everything else remained as before."

"Too much memory, or too little," said Vincent. "Who could choose?"

"I would take too much," said the resident.

"Wait till you are forty," said Vincent.

"Come, doctor," I said, "it is not the curiosities we came to see; you will find them in every ward. They have their own value to us; but now we can't talk of them." So saying, I turned to a bed near by. On the table were several books—a volume of Shakspere, and a novel or two from the hospital library, the Bible (as on all the tables), and some magazines. The sick man was about thirty-five years old, clean-shaven, large of feature, but very pale, and huge of limb and hand. As we came near a smile of singular sweetness welcomed me. "My friend Dr. Vincent," said I.

The sick man put out his thin hand and greeted us in turn, saying, "I 'm what they call an interesting case, sir." I sat down beside him.

"Mason, doctor, is a workman in iron. He made the beautiful hammered-iron fire-screen in my study."

"I was a good workman," he said, "but I shall never strike iron again, sir—will I, doctor? Oh, I

have asked that so often, and I ought not to. I beg pardon." There was fitness, almost grace of manner, in the apologetic checking of himself.

"Mason was hurt in the back, doctor, by the fall of a bar of iron. He knows how much I want to help him, and I am not without hope; but it may be long."

"Oh, I could wait, but I am that savage and irritable—I—"

"His wife was here yesterday," said my aid in an undertone.

"Books enough, Mason?" I said.

"Yes; and to spare, sir, and flowers too. Mrs. L—— takes care of that."

"Sit down," I said to Vincent, "and talk to him while I see a case or two. He has made friends with books since he has been in bed."

"That 's true, sir. It seems to me so queer now that I never heard of Scott before; and Hamlet, I know a man just like him. Ever read Hamlet, sir?"

Vincent sat down as I moved away, and while I examined two new cases I noticed that he was deep in interested talk with Mason. By and by I saw him shake hands with the sick man and heard him say, "Yes; I will come again," and then he joined me as I sat down by the bed of a lad of twenty.

"Is this a new case?" he said.

"Yes."

"Then let me hear how you go to work."

"I will try to tell you; it is not very easy without too much talk. Give me the bed-card," I said to my resident doctor. "Here. This lad came in yesterday; on his card you see his name, date of admission, a

place for the diagnosis, and, below, lines left for diet and change of treatment; also here is a chart of the heat-curves. In this ward-book the resident has written out every detail as to his habits, inheritance, illness. Take this card and run your eye over it. It will save time. It is a guide to the note-takers so that a certain order may prevail in our histories of cases."

"I see, I see. No organ is left unexamined. But how can you get the time? And you must have a whole arsenal of tools, if I may judge by the recent survey made of my own throat and eyes."

I laughed, and my resident doctor regarded this other physician with suppressed amusement, being himself a youngster who, by habit, eased the frictions of life with the precious ointment of mirth.

"Yes," I said; "I can, of course, make personally the whole study of a case. As a rule, here, where there is so much to be done that has to be done thoroughly and rapidly, one man goes over the eyes and other sense-organs, and one over the secretions, which may exact hours of work."

"And," added Vincent, "there are electric testings, I see. And reflexes! What on earth are they?"

This doctor who asked what a "reflex" meant was fast becoming too much for my resident, whose eyes were flashing with mirth, and narrowing to imminence of laughter. I touched his arm, as a warning, and went on: "Reflexes? Oh, reflex acts. I strike on a spot, say, below the knee, and a certain muscle instantly and in health always replies by a movement. There are many such. I might call them muscle-instinct acts."

"I see," returned Vincent. "It becomes clearer to me if I think of some of our instinctive acts as intellectual reflexes. There ought to be a new word—instinctions."

And now my resident cast a look of solemn wonder at this reasoning ignoramus.

"Let us put that to Clayborne," I said. "I want to show you how complete, how painstaking is our work; how efficient it is. If that sick boy were lord of a guinea a minute no more could be known of his case, no more could be done for it. Let us talk about this again when we meet. A hospital is a fertile text. We are at our best here. Illness in a private dwelling loads one at times with needless perplexities."

"One word more, North. I had an idea that you often made—well—made what people call a diagnosis by intuition; at least one reads of such things."

"Rather by tuition so complete that the intellectual act for the moment escapes analysis. Your idea belongs to the medicine of fiction. We do something like that, of course. A man walks in, and we guess at a look by his walk that he has disease of certain columns of the spine. It appears like magic to a layman, but after that comes the real and careful work. What is the cause, the man's history, his general state of health—these are the valuable things at which one cannot merely guess and rest tranquil. It is true that often we reason from dubious premises to conclusions as doubtful, and that requires a mind of very peculiar type. It is quite remote from the mathematic faculty."

"Yes; I do not well understand how a great mathe-

matician could ever be a physician of force. Galileo gave up medicine, I believe."

"The present case seems clear to me," I said, and, as we moved away, "I wish it were not. He has an aneurism of the arch of the aorta, the great artery. It compresses nerves that give motor activity to the muscles of speech."

"Then death is certain?"

"No; not quite. There is a chance, a small one; and he is young. That will help, except that it will make him impatient, and he must have six months of absolute rest in bed, and heroic doses of certain saline medicines."

"I see. And, pray tell me, do the young or the old bear sickness, long sickness, best?"

"Oh, that is a matter of temperament, of moral construction. Children well, I think; women too well."

"Too well?"

"Yes; to get a man into bed and a woman out of bed is almost equally difficult. But come; I am through. What about Mason, Vincent?"

"Oh, that poor fellow. You know people talk to me about themselves. It is a doubtful privilege."

"Yes; and he is as reserved and self-contained as a well-bred lady," I said.

"He told me of the wife, who is weak and giddy-minded; of his six children, like to starve or to go to the poorhouse. I shall see them to-morrow. Who is this Mrs. L—— he talks about?"

"Oh, an angel, a heart of gold. I wish we had a hundred like her."

"It is awful, isn't it, to see these many cases which only money can help? A mere question of money."

"Not altogether, but largely; yes, very largely. Look down this ward. I could point you out a dozen whose cases could be helped by money. This man needs a few weeks in the country to complete his cure, that man a month of salt air. Here is one so troubled because he will lose his place that cure becomes difficult. Here we are like to fail with another because he does not know how to feed his children while he is ill. The beneficiary associations help. Women like Mrs. L——, or as like as God allows, come between these people and their wants—wants which in illness you and I do not know. These wrecks of sturdy men talk to such women as they rarely talk to us. Women are the natural confessors of men; but, after all, there is always the lack of money. If I could do it, I would give every hospital a contingent fund—some thousands a year—for just such wants. And the people you see here are mostly mechanics—rarely mere laborers—proud as only the American is, loathing charity, and having to be taken with tact. And now good-by; I must have talked you tired, and said but half."

"No; you have brought me close to many things of which I had no clear conception. But it does seem to me that yours, my dear Owen, must be of all modes of usefulness the saddest."

"No; we were not sad in war, or we were rarely so, with comrades falling around us every month, and this seems to me much like it. One gets used to it. Who is permanently saddened by the ever-repeated inevitable? None but the morbid, I fancy. What I person-

ally hate is defeat, by death, by incurable ailments. I have the feeling, which all physicians ought to have, that every one should get well; that all disease is curable somehow. It is, I suspect, the intellectual defeat I so dislike; but there is a host of compensations."

"Thank you. You have really opened to me a vista of the physician's life which is worth a good deal."

V.

WEEK later I met Vincent one evening in the street. "Come," he said; "I am going to see Clayborne. I fancy we shall find St. Clair also. Have you seen our iron-worker to-day?"

"Yes; and he is really better; your talk did him good. What a tonic is hope. I fancy you helped him more than you know. He tells me you are about to secure a patent for him. Is it worth while?"

"Yes; I have submitted his model to S——. He tells me it is a very novel invention, and will bring him a good deal of money. It has been a pleasant task for me. The American of his class is so interesting, so self-respecting, and so just; I may add, so well-mannered. But here we are."

Clayborne was a bachelor, older than the rest of us, and a man of large fortune. We were shown up-stairs to the top of the house, the whole area of which (and it was large) was occupied by his library. From floor to ceiling, all around, were books. They overflowed on to the floor, the chairs, the many tables. Although he was as to his writings a historian, his tastes in literature were nearly limitless, and it seemed to me that he read everything save modern verse. The last novel,

the last magazine, the newest work of travel, even science, seemed to interest him. For modern poetry alone he had no strong liking. A slow thinker, he was also defective as to his power to enjoy wit or humor, and was apt laboriously to analyze a jest. I should prefer to say that he enjoyed mere rollicking fun, examined wit with a kind of scornful indifference, and was simply inaccessible to humor. Although a kindly man, he lived too much alone with his own very keen intelligence. He was apt to reason himself out of all beliefs in the need of attending to the duties of social and public affairs with an ease favored by his liking for books and a lonely contemplative existence. He had had fancies for several women, but, as Vincent once remarked, he was apt to set his cool brain to hatch the eggs of a warm heart, and then was surprised to find his eggs addled.

When we entered the great, airy room, with its busts of philosophers and its legions of books, St. Clair was seated at an open window, and the stalwart owner was walking to and fro with his hands behind his back. He was discoursing volubly to the sculptor on Greek and medieval art. Now and then he paused to turn up a gas-jet; for he enjoyed a superabundance of light, and even on a hot night in July, despite our entreaties, delighted to illuminate his study as if for a winter ball.

Both men greeted us with the conventional "How are you?" Vincent had a mental habit which in some men would have looked like affectation. He was apt to pick up for examination any usual word or phrase, and say about it something most unusual. It

made him as a talker very suggestive to quick-witted people; but to others this habit was apt to bring embarrassment, silent dismay, or one of those acquiescent phrases which kill conversation.

He said now, "Why does every one say, 'How are you? How do you do?'"

"Why not?" said St. Clair.

"Why not?" cried Vincent, dropping into a chair. "Am I always to be reminded that I am mortal? that I may be ill any day? It is a bit of universal bad manners."

"Of good, I should say," returned Clayborne.

"I do not agree with you," cried Vincent. "It is my friend's business to say how well I look; certainly it is an impertinence in a mere acquaintance to enter into the question of my health. I wonder how it began? I should like to know if an Indian or a Hottentot asks how his savage neighbor is."

"The mass of humanity must like it, or the custom would die," said our host, reflectively.

"Bad manners never die," returned Vincent, smiling.

"And what is the best test of good manners?" I said.

"Capacity to listen agreeably,' said Clayborne. We all laughed, for the speaker was at times given to discourse.

"I don't see why you laugh," he continued. This provoked a new outbreak.

"The hardest test of manners is the capacity to submit to an obligation with graciousness," I ventured.

"I should say," said St. Clair, "the power to oblige with grace."

"I can do neither," cried Clayborne. "I hate being obliged, and I hate to oblige, because there is no end to it. The man who obliges gets in debt. There is nothing obliges like obligation."

"Oh!" ejaculated Vincent.

"Yes; both embarrass me—to oblige and to be obliged."

Said Vincent: "It is the complexities of life which annoy us. The man who gives with joyous simplicity gives, as we all should give, for his own sake. The simply imaginative, kindly man expects to do his own thankfulness. 'The Lord assisteth the simple.' It is self-analysis which breeds annoyance. I was walking in the Tyrol years ago, and found a charming wayside fountain over which the giver had set the words—I can translate them roughly—

'Ye who drink,
Pause and think.'

An old Englishman who came up as I contemplated the inscription said to me, 'That man had bad manners.'"

"The point is too fine for my use," growled Clayborne.

Said St. Clair: "There is an equally odd inscription on the marble floor of a lovely spring in an English wood I know. It puzzled me."

"And now the talk has gone astray," said Clayborne, discontentedly.

"And so it should," I replied.

"But St. Clair always gets adrift."

"He 's a poet," laughed Vincent. "I should define a poet as a man with buttons to his mental garments

and no buttonholes. He is always fumbling at the impossible."

"Now, wait a little," cried the poet, mildly wrathful "Who 's adrift now?"

"Oh, your fountain," said I. "What was the inscription? Never mind these fellows."

"It is not worth quoting," said St. Clair.

Clayborne had, without intention, a special power to annoy him. Looking up, however, St. Clair caught Vincent's appearance of utmost interest. It seemed to say, "You are just now the only person in the world worth hearing." It was an inherited trait of manners —a family jewel.

St. Clair went on: "I make too much of a trifle. On the marble-floored spring, in letters of red stone, were the words, 'Tell us your secrets.' At each side the spring rolled forth a bountiful volume of water, which, as I looked, seemed to contort and shake, and at times to hide the legend."

"What did it mean?" said Clayborne.

"Was it," I returned, "advice to confess to the waters? That were safe indeed."

"Or," said St. Clair, "was it a mere pretty, fancy-born appeal to them to tell us their secrets?"

"Ah, if they but would!" murmured Vincent. "I am for St. Clair's idea of it. When you make a fountain, master sculptor, set around it that verse of the 19th Psalm. It is not there applied to the waters, but, like all high poetic thought, is capable of many applicative uses. I quote the Prayer-book version. It is, I think, 'There is neither speech nor language; but their voices are heard among them.'"

"That would be charming," said St. Clair.

Clayborne picked up his unwieldy length, and, as Mrs. Vincent liked to say, added on his legs last, and, having put himself together, went to a corner, whence he took two or three books in turn, and while we went on with our chat looked them over. Presently he came toward us, for we had dropped at last into cane easy-chairs, and were all smoking together near the window. "Vincent is apt to get his quotations incorrect," he said. "The words apply, of course, to the verse before, 'One day telleth another; and one night certifieth another,' and also to the preceding verse. I should hesitate to use it as Vincent suggests."

"But I should not," cried St. Clair.

"King James's Bible," Clayborne went on, "says, 'There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard.' And here, this will interest you. My old friend, Leeser's translation for use among Hebrews, has it, 'There is no speech; there are no words; their voice is not heard: but their melody extendeth through all the earth, and to the end of the world their work,' and so on. For force, beauty, and clearness this is better than our version."

"Let me look at it," said Vincent.

"This is the octavo," said Clayborne; "the quarto edition is full of notes, and more interesting."

"I see," returned Vincent, as he glanced over the book. "The renderings of the poetic forms of Deborah's grand ballad-poem are admirable. I will borrow it, Clayborne."

"I have had it bound in two volumes," returned the scholar. "I dislike thick books, fat books, books

which do not lend themselves to the hospitality of the hand. I hate to lay a book open on the table and see it shut itself up. If a man lives with books, he gets sensitive about their dress and their manners."

"How poetical he is!" said St. Clair, who was apt to have a long memory for small annoyances.

"Is that your idea of poetry?" growled our host. "Take both volumes, V."—he had a fashion of calling us by the initial letter of our names,—"both, please. And don't forget to return them. I hate to lose books; but to lose one volume and to have the other as a perpetual reminder of the baseness of mankind is unendurable."

"Do you remember," said I, "S——'s keeping one of your volumes of 'Cardan,' two years ago, and your sending him the rest with a note to the effect that if he would not return volume one, it were better that the family were kept together?"

"Oh, I do, indeed. And then he sent them all back. I knew he would, but the volume he had kept so long was horribly abused. Actually the man had made penciled comments on the margins."

"That does seem incredible," I said.

As to Vincent, he smiled in his quiet way when requested to be sure to return the books.

"What did a man like S—— want with the book?" said St. Clair. "I know of Jerome Cardan in a dim sort of way. He was a doctor, I think."

"Oh, but he was a master of algebra too," said I, "and S—— is a mathematician. And a banker, too, by all that is strange. Mathematics is his hobby. He is a common fellow, coarse of grain, strong of head.

A hard business man, and horribly exact in his dealings; full of prejudices; full even to hostility for those who differ with him, but very generous. I know him well."

"I should like to know your full estimate of us," cried Vincent, with a laugh. "I can understand the perfect compatibility of generosity with exactness, even cruel exactness, in business. It is not a rare type."

"And to me," said St. Clair, "it is incomprehensible."

"I can at least illustrate it," I returned. "On one occasion I knew him to ruin a man by insisting on the return of money lent. He declined to wait, took the last cent of what was due, and a month later lent the penniless man a really large sum on easy terms to start him in business again."

"I know of a case quite as illustrative," said Vincent. "A friend of mine, a physician, did a rich manufacturer a vast service in the way of his profession. When the obliged man asked for his account, he requested a deduction for prompt payment, and this being declined, grumbled over the amount. The doctor was immovable. 'You are at liberty,' he said, 'to pay nothing or all.' 'But this is business,' answered the other; 'why not discuss it like any other business?' 'I am not a business man,' said my friend; 'I belong to a profession. I sell that which no man can weigh or measure.' Finally the bill was paid, and then the manufacturer, suddenly changing his tone, said, 'Well, now that the business is completed, I should like you to accept this as a slight proof of our gratitude.' It was a check for thrice the amount of the debt. The

doctor said, 'No; I never allow a man to overpay me.' The next day the check was sent to a hospital in which the physician was interested."

"I like that definition of a profession," said Clayborne. "I think I can guess who the doctor was."

Vincent looked up with a faint smile.

"The story is true," I said. "How difficult it is for us to comprehend these men who are born and bred in a commercial atmosphere. The type of mere business men, devoid of this man's generosity, is a more unpleasant one."

"Oh, I know them," cried Vincent, "and I see them, too, as you do not, on the business side. They have set ideas and utter absence of tastes or pursuits outside of the game of money-making. I mean that they have in life no other game. They do not read, or shoot, or fish, or even ride. They have no liking for books, or art, or music. Travel soon bores them, and brings no new resources."

"The nemesis comes with loss of health," said I, "or with some threat of incapacity to work. Then the doctor says, travel, and either the man does not care for that, or will not obey, or goes like a bird in its flight from land to land, and comes back to his desk unutterably weary. It is useless to say, shoot, fish, ride. He has but one taste in life, and habit has made all else impossible."

"To do him justice, it is not always the money but the game he loves," remarked Vincent. "I think the gospel of play needs to be preached in this land of ours."

"The moral is," said Clayborne, "have a hobby."

"And learn to ride it early," said Vincent, rising. "I must go." And he left us.

For a few minutes we smoked in silence. Then Clayborne said, "V. has left his books."

"Yes," I returned; "when he put them on the table I saw, as he pushed them aside, that he would not take them."

"Why?"

"You asked him to be sure to return them."

"I did. What then? What of that?"

"He did not like it. He is as sensitive as a girl, and as reserved as a man can be."

"And I annoyed him. I will send him the quarto to-morrow, and ask him to keep it. How queer for a man of his force."

"His sensitiveness is a part of his force. He sees and feels as by instinct all the shades of difference in men's ways and conduct. His reserve hides the effect on himself. He is master of his moods, however they are caused. Socially, as now, he may act on his too ready sense of the meaning of a word or a phrase lightly dropped; but even this is rare, and in his profession his fineness of perception never does him harm or injures his value."

"I see," returned Clayborne, thoughtfully. "Go on; it interests me, well as we know him."

"I could wish that he had the art to appear unreserved," I said. "Reserve is disliked by men in general. Familiarities, even from friends, I fancy Vincent finds it hard to bear."

"And yet, what friend can compare to him?" said St. Clair, who was like a child with those he loved.

"He is manly, brave, and generous as few men are. And what I like, too, is a slight old-fashioned quaintness about him quite undefinable."

"His ears should burn by this time," said I. "And where, indeed, as he would say, did that familiar phrase arise?"

"Do one's ears burn at praise?" said Clayborne.

"Praise me a little, and try," said St. Clair. "Come, North, it is time we went home. I wanted to go back to that fountain, but it is too late."

"I meant," said I, "to add a word to what you said of Vincent's manners. It is the manner of his manners which makes him so charming. Many men have good manners; few men have manner."

"Too fine for me, that," cried Clayborne. "What is manner?"

"The grain of the wood under the polish," returned St. Clair.

"The modification which character gives to manners," said I.

"Shade of Chesterfield, help me!" laughed Clayborne. "Get ye gone, both of you, or I shall go mad."

VI.

IT was some weeks before we were all together again. St. Clair had asked us to come to see certain clay models he had been at work upon, and thus it chanced one night that we met at his studio. This was a long building of brick, and only a story high. The rooms were separated only by heavy curtains, and the roof was broken by skylights. The place was ablaze with gas-jets as I entered the waiting-room, which was full of bas-reliefs, statuettes, and pictures—the gifts of artist friends. St. Clair was walking to and fro.

"A penny for your thoughts," I said, as I greeted him.

"They are worth more. I was thinking how Michelangelo would have enjoyed this good pipe of tobacco. As to Shakspere, he must have smoked. I should like to know who of the poets smoked. Lamb alone has sung of it. Lowell loved a pipe: so does Tennyson; but neither ever sang its praise."

"Certainly you are wrong as to Lowell," I said. "I recall a charming passage of his about the solace of the pipe. It is an immense help to good talk, makes decent pauses, gives time to reflect, and what a resource it is when a good solidly constructed bore has you in his coils."

"You speak feelingly. When shall you write that little essay about bores we talked of?"

"Oh, who can say? When I shall have written my natural history of fools. I began it once, but was checked at the outset by the need to define a bore. It is more mysterious than it seems. We are all bores at times. I am, I know. I am acquainted with two very able and original thinkers who never talk very long, and never pay long visits, but who nevertheless indescribably bore me. I made out at last, as regards one, that it was something in the tone of his voice; and as to the other, that it was the excessive slowness of his talk."

"The man who bores one the worst," said St. Clair, "the through-and-through bore, is the man who assumes the utter absence of capacity on your part to imagine or to know what is easily imagined or known. He begins with the Ark, or the Fall of Man, when he is about to relate how he slipped on an orange-peeling."

"I know," said I. "We have a style of professional bore we call a case-doctor, who is always relating to you cases just in that fashion. As to the fool business, that is simpler. There is the foolish fool, the fool who is a good fellow, the ass fool, and the fool finely endowed with obstinacy—the mule fool, and the middle-aged woman fool. They are all first cousins of the bores."

"And which am I?" cried Vincent, as he entered with Clayborne.

"The reverse of all folly," I cried.

"I? By George! If you had my intimate acquaintance with Fred Vincent you would hardly say so."

"Envy no man," said Clayborne, "who is not sometimes a fool. The thing is to know it. Your true fool never does. Sickness, my dear Owen, must present you with some interesting varieties of the genus fool."

"Yes," I returned; "the hysterical fool is of all the worst. How about the statues, St. Clair?"

"Come in. They are only huge sketches as yet."

We followed him into the middle room, where, amid plaster legs, arms, torsos, and medallions, were three tall formless things draped in wet gray cloths. About them lay chisels, molding-tools, buckets, and troughs of damp clay.

"Do you recall," said St. Clair to me, "that a year ago you were here when I was modeling my Venus?"

"Perfectly."

"You inquired of me how the female form would look in a masculine attitude like that of the gladiator striking with the cestus. I asked Miss S——, the model, to take the attitude. I was struck with its beauty, and a month ago I made use of it, or began to. It is a Roman lady, in the days of the decadence, boxing. You know it became the strange fashion to imitate the gladiators. Look!" And at this he cast off the wet covering.

A young, nude, and beautiful woman was striking exactly as does the trained boxer. The face, somewhat large of feature, was proud, sensual, and cruel. The muscles were rather too strongly marked for beauty, but the long, sinuous curves from shoulder to foot were of marvelous vigor.

"It has its moral," said Vincent, gravely.

"Yes," returned the sculptor; "I hope so."

Then we were silent a moment, and he went on. "It had a curious effect on my model. Miss S—— is a perfectly good girl, like many of our models, and queerly full of the art sayings and criticisms of a dozen studios. She said she did not like it, and I really think was angry, but I could get nothing more out of her."

"One might guess why she disliked it," said Vincent. "It is a terrible conception. Let us see the other. I am like your model, I hate it."

"And I may in a week," returned St. Clair, as he removed a second cloth, and looked around at us, smiling.

Four armed Greeks bore on their shoulders a shield on which lay, passive in death, the body of a young man slain in battle. The beardless face, still in the relaxation of death, rested on the edge of the shield. The features wore the expressionless calm of eternal rest from strife. I remarked on the success of the rendering of this difficult expression, or simple lack of expression, which I had seen on so many battle-fields. It is not lasting, and it is not common.

"But," said Vincent, "are not men, killed with the sword, apt to show pain in the lines of the face after death?"

"Really," I said, "so few men are killed with the sword or bayonet in modern warfare that it is rather hard to answer you. For the artist this is of little moment. Men killed instantly by bullets sometimes preserve for a time precisely the expression of the moment, and no doubt you have all seen those photographs of the dead at Gettysburg, where some of them remain in exactly the postures of their last act."

"No," said Clayborne. "How strange!"

"It appears," I continued, "to be a sudden, indeed, an almost instantaneous, *rigor mortis*. Usually the dead grow rigid after some hours. Previous fatigue is said to have to do with this early and abrupt rigidity. The effect is ghastly. One of our greatest generals* told me that at a spring in Georgia he halted to water his horse, and called to a man kneeling with his head at the water-level to move and make way for him. As he did not stir, an aide dismounted and spoke to him. He still remained motionless, and it was then seen that while in the act of kneeling to drink a bullet had crashed through his brain, and he had stayed, as if of stone, in the attitude in which the deadly messenger of fate found him."

"I recall your having mentioned this before," said Clayborne. "You spoke then of an essay upon the subject."

"Yes; by Surgeon John H. Brinton—a most curious record."

"I once chanced," said Clayborne, "to mention it to General Grant. He said that it could not be true, as he had seen numberless battle-fields, but had never noticed a single instance of a man shot retaining his posture. I replied that General Sheridan had told me he had many times seen it, and spoke of Brinton's paper. General Grant replied at once that what these two men said they had noticed must be correct, but that it was strange that he himself should never have had his attention called to what was so singular a fact."

* Sherman.

"The singularity," I replied, "is indeed in his failure to see what must have been before him many times. He must have been lacking in the power of minute observation, or rather in that automatic capacity to note details amidst such scenes, which some possess."

"He might," said Vincent, "have been too profoundly absorbed by the greater problems with which he had to deal."

"No; it was want of the naturalist's habit of observing without effort of attention, and in part defect of interest in the unusual. He saw, but was not impressed, and so took away no remembrance of what impressed others. Certainly it was not the mere absorption in greater matters. He was almost abnormally unimpressible. Neither sudden deaths of masses of men, nor sudden reverses, disturbed his mind. I have known him to discuss breeds of horses with interest while a battle was going on."

As I talked, and after I ceased, we moved about the group for a while in silence. Then presently Vincent said, "The charm of the thing is in the bearers of the dead. It is not a calamity for them. The young hero goes home on his shield from victorious strife, dead with honor. The contrast of his set, still face with the look of triumph in their features is really a noble success in art, and there is, too, some remnant of the passion and wrath of fight still suggested in the lower facial lines of the living bearers. I congratulate you, St. Clair; it is a poem in clay. The epitaph of the dead man is in their faces."

St. Clair was delighted. "You have seized my meaning precisely," he said. "My chief trouble was in the

management of the arm which hangs over the shield. It does not yet satisfy me, and to finish it in marble will be difficult."

"Had you good models?" I said. "The four men are remarkably individualized, both as to form and expression. One is much younger than the others, and his face is distinctly more sad."

"Might be a brother of the dead man," said Vincent.

"Precisely," returned St. Clair. "What charming critics you fellows are! As to models, I was fairly well off; I had two brothers of Miss S——."

"The shield is not correct as to form," said Clayborne.

"That may be true," returned the sculptor.

"Nothing seems to me more strange," I said, "than the life of a female model. And yet great ladies have been willing to be models."

"What you say," returned St. Clair, "recalls a rather singular story, which came to my knowledge in Italy years ago. Come into the outer room; it is less warm there, and we can talk at ease. The third figure is unfinished, and does not please me. It is after Browning's poem of 'Saul.' No; I won't show it, at least not to-night. Come."

We followed him into the outer room, and settled ourselves on lounges or easy-chairs, pipe in hand.

"And now for the story," said I.

"It was in Florence," he said, "years ago. The sculptor N——, at present a man of world-wide fame, was just rising into notice. He was desperately poor, proud as only an impoverished noble can be, and as

handsome as one of my young Greeks. His absorption in his art was something past belief. He lived in it, and for it, and neither man nor woman seemed to attract him save in their relation to his work. I remember once, after an evening at the theater, being amused to discover that he did not know what opera had been sung, his attention having been entirely captured by the lines of the neck of a woman in a box near by.

"To cut a long story short, the young widow of an old Neapolitan prince fell madly in love with him, and, to my surprise, I learned that he was to marry her. He was rather cool about it when I congratulated him, and so the affair ran on for some months, the woman evidently much the more interested of the two.

"One night, at an open-air concert, he was talking to me excitedly of his new statue—a vestal virgin, a partly draped figure. I had seen his sketches, and anticipated a triumph of original work in its completion. Certainly the idea was novel. The vestal was asleep in her chair beside the dying altar-fire she had been set to guard. A tender smile, perhaps the dream-gift of forbidden love, was on her face—a charming conception. He told me he had had several models, but that all lacked the dignity and refinement of a Roman patrician. He foresaw failure, and wailed in an outspoken Italian way. What was the world to him? What was anything, with this fate before him, to know he might realize his vision of chastity and loveliness, and to find it eluding him? There were models in Rome, but he had no means to seek or bring them. I offered help as delicately as I could, and he resented it almost as an insult.

"'Do you suppose,' said he, 'the Princess N—— would not help me if I asked her? I would die first! Money! I wish she had none.'

"'Hush!' I said; 'some one will overhear you. You have so much in life—your art, your growing fame, a noble woman, love, youth.'

"'And what are these?' he cried, bitterly. 'What is anything to me? What is youth or fame? What is she compared to my art? Do you suppose any woman's love can compensate me for what I am losing? These dreams must be born into marble or they become as wind-torn mists, and fade away. I have had this bitterness before, and love! you talk to me of love!'

"'Nonsense,' I said; 'you cannot love as a man should love—as that woman is worthy to be loved.'

"He started up.

"'Love her as I love my art? Not I. The mortal before the enduring? Not I.'

"He was too passionately moved to hear the quick rustle of garments behind us. But, turning my head, I saw, or thought I saw, the Princess retreating swiftly. A week later I met him radiant and joyous. As he took a seat beside me at a café, he cried:

"'I have it! The clay is nearly done. Count R—— has bought it, and I am to put it into marble at once.'

"'And the model?' I said.

"'Ah, thereby hangs a tale, as you English say. The day after I saw you the Princess left Florence. She returns next week. It is strange how she disturbs my use of the power which I know is in me. I felt free once more. You will think that horrible; it is true.

Well, the day I bade her good-by I found a peasant woman waiting in my studio. She was, to my amusement, masked, and carried a little slate, like Ursula, the dumb model in Rome. On the slate was written: "I am a model. My brothers insist that my face shall not be seen. I can come daily for a week." I said: "Well, here is the statue in the rough. Go back of the curtain; take this veil stuff; arrange yourself; and we will see." Presently she came in, still masked, and took instantly the pose of my vestal. I was struck as dumb as she. An arm and shoulder are bare; the left arm, gathering the drapery, lies across the waist; the limbs are partly draped; the feet are in little sandals I had had made. Anything more gracious, more virginal, man never saw. I asked no questions, but went on as if I were inspired. No model I can recall so caught the spirit of the thing. If the ghost of some patrician girl of Rome's noblest had come to help me, it could not have been more wonderful. It was not a model; it was a vestal. The seventh day she did not appear, and that is the queerest of all, because I had agreed to pay her then, and her terms were unusually moderate. However, it is done, or nearly done; I can do without her—but—'

"'But what?'

"'Oh, I should have liked to have seen her again. That is all.'

"'And,' I said, 'when does Princess N—— return?'

"'To-morrow. I shall be glad to see her. My mind is at ease now; and how much it will please her!'

"We met again in three days. He was wild with anger.

"'She is gone!' he said. 'Come and gone. Gone to Constantinople, they said, and thence to the East. Not a word, not a note. I had written to her at Naples, but had no reply. Yesterday I called, and was told she was not at home; and to-day, that she left last night.'

"I said that it did seem strange to me, and that something certainly would explain it in a few days; but nothing did."

"WELL," said Clayborne, "is that all?"

"You don't mean that you don't understand it!" cried St. Clair.

"Yes. It seems to me entirely without ending."

The rest of us laughed. Clayborne, a most intelligent being, was subject at times to total eclipses.

"Perhaps," said St. Clair, "the sequel may help you. Three years later the Princess N—— married Count von C——, the German cavalry general, and a man in every way charming. Still later, at the sale of the effects of Count R——, the Princess bought my friend's vestal, outbidding an English duke and a French banker. I was told that she keeps it in her own boudoir, and that no visitors see it."

"And is that a true story?" said Vincent.

"Why ask?" cried St. Clair.

"Oh, I wanted to know if the man really did not know or ever guess who his model was. It seems incredible."

"I never asked him."

"I suppose not."

"I see now," said Clayborne, and was noisily congratulated on his acuteness amidst storms of laughter.

"Did I not once tell you," said the object of our mirth, "that at times all of us are subject to attacks of folly—idiocy, if you like. *Vide* Newton and the cats."

"Do you suppose the reverse applies to the fool?" laughed Vincent.

"Yes," I said; "in a way, up to a certain or uncertain limit. A friend of mine once made a clever enigma. It was correctly answered, and that in a moment, by a rather dull school-girl and by one of the most brilliant of American writers, but by no one else."

"Leave out the headings of a good many poems I know," said Clayborne, "and see if you have not good enigmas."

"Let us hear your enigma," said Vincent.

"Certainly," said I. "By the way, to justify Clayborne, I may as well say that it was really lines on—"

"Oh, don't tell!" cried St. Clair.

"Well, the author saw that without the heading it was a clever enigma. I believe it has not been in print.

"A simple go-between am I,
Without a thought of pride;
I part the gathered thoughts of men,
And liberally divide.
I set the soul of Shakspere free,
To Milton's thoughts give liberty,
Bid Sidney speak with freer speech,
Let Spenser sing, and Taylor preach.
Though through all learning swift I glide,
No wisdom doth with me abide."

"What nonsense!" said Clayborne. "And the answer?"

"Don't tell!" cried St. Clair. "Let us ask Mrs. Vincent."

"Agreed," said I.

"As you like," added Clayborne; "but to go back a little. There is some element of luck in the guessing business, almost the chance falling upon the clue; and as to the reverse cases of which you spoke, there are instances of the single poem of value a man writes, the one speech of force coming from men who were before, or after, incapable. Take the stray passages in books, otherwise valueless, as the guess at the true theory of the circulation by Servetus. If my memory served me better, I could quote no end of such cases. Talking of memory, H—— told me once that he could never remember his own poems—I mean so as to repeat them accurately. That seemed odd to me."

"Not at all," said I. "He has in mind a multitude of versions, variations, and changes. It is like the want of clearness which is caused by the superposition of photographic images."

"That must be it. And, by the way, North, you promised us a sketch from the man who has the curious complaint of too good a memory. Is that alone as a case, or did you ever hear of a like instance?"

"Yes; the late C—— P—— told me he knew well a French *savant* who was troubled by the perfection of his memory. He forgot nothing. The words a passing friend said in the street, the editorial he read today, the lecture he heard a week or five years ago were all alike, and equally ready to turn up in mind distinct, or capable of being repeated word for word. His childish fears, emotions experienced years before, were

in the same way competent to trouble him in all the acuteness of their first presence. Unlike my patient, this man, a member of the Academy, was a person of great intelligence, and had his memorial stores somewhat under control. About my case there is an element of morbidness, and certainly only a moderate amount of mental force."

"I should think," said Clayborne, "that a curious essay could be written about the people who possessed an excess of one quality of mind without the balancing faculties which act as critical or controlling forces. I can conceive of a man with a really good intellect without imagination, or of a strong mind devoid of power to love."

"Like a cherub—a winged brain and no heart," said St. Clair.

"Delightful!" cried Vincent. "And again there is the man of imagination without critical intelligence."

"But how is it, North, as to people with excessive sensory powers? Are they apt to be as clever as others?"

"No; hardly," I replied, a little in doubt. "The cases I have seen of extraordinary sight, hearing, or smell have been in hypnotized or hysterical folks, or in people in some way diseased. I have known persons who could hear what was said in the next room; others who could detect by smell to whom garments belonged which had been laundried. Now that you raise the question, it does seem strange that our senses should sometimes in disease, or morbid conditions, attain a perfection beyond that which under any education they can reach in health."

"Your examples serve at least to show what we might be," said Clayborne. "There are some curious speculations in this direction in Taylor's 'Physical Theory of Another Life.'"

"But what about your case?" said St. Clair.

"I have it here," said I. "It is rather long, but you can smoke."

"Let me quote first," said Vincent, "the reflection of Emerson, 'A pity that the insanities of the insane are not complementary, so that we could house two of them together.' That is about his phrase. I fancy he referred to the cranks who tormented him."

"And," said St. Clair, "who have no dead point like an honest working crank."

"I must not let Vincent begin the subject of cranks," I said, "or we shall sit all night. But as Vincent quoted that suggestive thinker I was reflecting upon the fact that while we accept individuality as a thing certain for all men, and cease to wonder at its immensity of variation, we rarely remark upon the equal individualization of man's many faculties—the distinctness of quality in the different little workmen who haunt the factories of the brain. And then the wonder of it! To see these brain-cells and fibers so nearly alike that while the convolutions, the weight, and the gross form of the low criminal brain and the brain of a Newton are, within limits, different, these tiny creative or reflective cells, these little masses of nerve-matter that think, suffer, remember, and love, and always in their own individualized way, are so much alike in the best and the worst brains that the grouped cells that made 'Hamlet' could not be distinguished by any

material feature from those which gave us 'Proverbial Philosophy.'"

"Or 'Leaves of Grass,'" said Clayborne.

"Bet you anything you never read either," said St. Clair. "'Leaves of Grass' and Tupper! There was a bore."

"There are no literary bores," retorted Clayborne. "No book need bore; you can always cut a book."

"Or not *cut* it," I laughed.

"Shame!" cried Clayborne.

"Shall I help you?" said St. Clair.

"Oh, I saw it. I really did," said Clayborne.

"I am not sure," cried St. Clair, rising to fill his pipe anew. "But to end these metaphysical fancies. It does seem strange to a man dealing with the material outside human make, that while every inch of a man's skin varies so that you can swear to it as belonging to this or that man, and to no one else, the material within his skull, which at least represents him as to his highest qualities, should be to appearances so unindividual, and vary only a little as to quantity, or only a little as to gross form."

"There must be more essential variations, unseen as yet," said Vincent.

"Yes; it is we, the critics, who fail," I replied.

"As the mere materialists always will," cried Vincent. "But what does St. Clair mean by every inch of us differing?"

"I mean our surfaces. You can see it if you get a thousand men to press each his forefinger on a bit of slightly smoked card. No two will be identically the same."

"Delightful!" said Vincent. "Sounds like a bit of 'Gulliver's Travels.'"

"Oh, it is true; it has been studied, I believe, with care. What about that biography?"

"It is rather late," said I.

"Oh, go on," returned St. Clair. "We can smoke, as you said."

"No; we have talked away all the time I can now spare. Let us adjourn to Vincent's, say to Sunday night. We shall have Mrs. Vincent then, and I want her to hear it."

VII.

IF there be such a thing as friendship at first sight, then it happened to me when first I saw Mrs. Vincent. I was still in bed, and at times suffering in such ways as are hideous to recall, and Fred had asked leave to bring his young wife to see me. I was glad, for, as I have said, to be ill is a feminine verb, and agrees best with that gender. I was justified in her choice of time and a companion. She would have none of Fred, and went quietly and asked Mrs. L—— to go with her, and also she sent me word it would be at twilight, and named the hour, and was there as it struck—all of which goes to show that a goodly part of the divinity which shapes our ends materializes here below in the form of a woman.

She said no word as to my wound or my ailments, and yet, often since, I have seen her profuse in sentiment and demonstrative in manner, being a creature of many available moods. She talked pretty gossip, while Mrs. L—— sat by and wondered a little at the light folly of the chat. But when Anne Vincent left me, I was happier and more hopeful. At the door she turned, Mrs. L—— having preceded her, and said, "And now we are friends, you know." And with a

smile on her lip, and with eyes quite overfull, added, "I am very exacting. Good-by."

Her goodness, her gentle follies, and the like we shall know better as these rambling pages go on.

The drawing-room was unlighted, as it was May and warm, and Mrs. Vincent, with St. Clair and Clayborne, sat at the open window, which overlooked large garden spaces.

"How silent you all are!" said I.

"That is only because we do not speak aloud," said St. Clair, with a laugh. "We are busily talking to ourselves. For my part, when I think that I came out of silence and shall return to it again, I feel what a vast balance there is against me.

"Oh, is there not enough of silence here,
Of joy unspoken, of unworded cheer?"

Clayborne muttered in his great beard something about grown-up children, and then said aloud, "It is a Persian poet who says:

"Silence is the seed of thought."

"Well, then, that man had better have kept quiet a little longer!" exclaimed St. Clair. "Talk is the seed of thought."

"That is measurably true for me," returned Vincent, who had just entered. "At all events, I get cleared up as to a problem when I talk it out, and especially when I speak it out afoot; I mean in court, for instance."

"But for my part," I said, "I never clear my head to my satisfaction until I write out my thinkings. I may have to do it over and over, but in no other way do I get the best out of my brain."

"And I," said Clayborne, "must sit down with a pipe, alone, and let my head work. Then it comes, if it come at all. But this follows days of looser, yet quite constant musing on the matter, and I talk slowly, as you know."

"Yes; we know," murmured St. Clair, viciously.

"Bad boy!" whispered Mrs. Vincent. "Go into a corner of silence, and stay there. Pray go on, Mr. Clayborne."

"I fancy," he continued, "that the rate of thought must govern the rate of speech. Quick thinkers are rapid speakers."

"I wonder," said St. Clair, "why it bothers a fellow to talk on his feet. I once had to speak at a dinner. I shiver at the remembrance. Where did my thoughts go, Owen? I got up with a full pocket, and in a moment was a bankrupt."

"Judging," said I, "from one's feelings the day after a public dinner, one's thoughts must go to the liver."

"That explains it," laughed Vincent. "It has always been a puzzle to me."

"Apropos of puzzles," said Mrs. Vincent, "Fred tells me you have an enigma for me, and that is curious, because I have one for you."

"Here is ours," I returned, and repeated it.

"You will never guess it," said Clayborne. "It roosted that night in a corner of my brain, and kept me awake. At last I cursed it in good Arabic, and fell asleep."

"Stop!" said Mrs. Vincent. "It is—" And she whispered to me.

"You have it. That is correct."

"The female brain is an extraordinary instrument," said Clayborne, reflectively; while Vincent, laughing, insisted on hearing the solution.

"No," she said; "not until you have guessed mine, and perhaps not then. It is short, and pretty, and very easy; in fact, it was made for some children. Here it is:

"My first is one,
My second five,
My whole is four,
And backwards six."

"That is rather pretty," said St. Clair. "Is it—" And he whispered.

"No; that is clever, but not correct."

"An amusement for fiends," said Clayborne. "Anything is better."

"Do you all give it up?" asked Mrs. Vincent. "Well, the answer is—I shall never, never, tell you the answer."

"Then here is my history. I had the man's leave to use it. And now, candles, please." And so I went on.

NOTES OF A CASE OF TOO GOOD A MEMORY.

As a child I was remarked on account of absence of imagination, and for a memory of remarkable character. I learned everything with singular ease. As I grew older, I found it so possible to memorize readily that in place of using my mind in geometry or algebra, I simply read over the problems and their solutions, and got them by heart. At first this method answered

all the demands of education, but when I came to apply my knowledge to examples where no solutions were given, I of course failed. Nevertheless, I was so ready with acquired knowledge that I contrived to zigzag through my school course, and then, by my father's help, obtained a place as reporter of street incidents.

And here let me pause to describe my mental condition. The full consciousness of the great mental peculiarity of which I now speak came to me only after a time, and by degrees, and more by reason of the remarks made by others than from my own unassisted observation. This struck me forcibly once when I was about to do a race; I was then eighteen years old. A man asked what was the lineage of a certain horse. I began, and without effort, or, indeed, thought, traced the parentage back to Eclipse. This excited vast amazement. Then, as afterward, I wondered at the surprise and interest my powers of memory occasioned. The results which caused surprise were purely automatic, and cost me no effort; nor have I ever been able to feel that I had to try in order to recall a fact. In a word, my memory was perfect. At first this may seem to the reader a matter of little interest; but in reality the power to forget is one of the most valuable and helpful gifts which a man possesses. When men regret the want of vivid memory, I wonder, and envy the deficiency of which they complain. I wish, indeed, that I could feel sure of the power of death as an obliterative change. As to the loss of memory, of which the aged speak, I am most anxious. I presume, from what I hear, that men lose in time the vivid recollections of sorrow, and that Methuselah at nine hundred

might have reflected with little discomfort on the follies, the griefs, the crimes, of his youth. Even the keenest remorse would lose its cruel edge and be rusted dull by time. If I read a book, it is mine forever; clever or vapid, there it is. I forget nothing. I can repeat Shakspere from end to end. As a consequence, nothing seems to me to be fresh or original. A phrase recalls one like it, and as life goes on I cease to get pleasure out of books or men's talk.

At one time I eked out my narrow income by reading manuscripts for a journal; but as in regard to the cleverest contributions I could at once point out endless plagiarisms of thought or expression, I soon became unpopular and lost the occupation. Somewhat later I was given work to do for an encyclopedia. Seemingly there was no task for which my enormous store of varied erudition was better fitted, and yet here too I failed. My employers complained that I had no sense of proportion. All knowledge was alike to me, and all was equally well remembered. The large, the small, were as one in my mind, and had the same importance, because the place of a comma, and the words among which it lay, seemed to me equally distinct. As I reflect on this with an ever-present sense of puzzle, I seem to myself to be a mere memorial machine in which the gearing of association is altogether too complete.

My intensity of memory is accompanied with a curious automatic capacity over which I have, as life goes on, a constantly lessening control. If I remember a note, or a bar of music, I seem to hear it and a long succession of passages from the opera to which it be-

longs, and this is also true as to books. When awake in the dark, but also in a less degree in the daylight, I have any scene or incident which occurs to me visually projected into space before my eyes even more vividly than when I first saw it. Of late the fidelity of these recurring phantoms has troubled me, on account of their appearance seeming to be real, or what is called objective. I ascribe such apparitions to the diseased perfectness of memory, for sometimes what is past returns to me remembered in a shape even more distinct than was the impression made at the time by the then present course of the occurrence. It is singular to me that remembered sounds, which ring in my head, seem heard within it, but things once seen always appear to be outside of the head.

As I remember my dreams quite as well as the scenes of the day, I find myself troubled at times, and in doubt as to whether something is real or the product of a dream; for if a dream be as definite as a thing seen in the daylight, how shall we know it to be a thing untrue?

Certainly absolute perfection of memory is a misfortune, unless the deliberative and executive powers of the mind are normally competent to keep discipline and deal with memories which have the force of a mob.

I am told,—indeed, I know,—that, for most men, time slowly but surely blurs emotional recollections. If it were not so, all lives would be like mine—unendurable. With me the strong absolute fact of a calamity, the thing as it took place, really lives in my mind as if it had happened a moment ago, and with its recollection rises, in agonizing clearness, the emo-

tion to which it originally gave birth. Time has no destructive value; all the details remain. Thus, as to my mother's death, I am forced, when associations arise, to see in all its ghastliness the minutest of the incidents of her last hours with the dreadful sharpness they had for me when, a tender child of twelve, I saw her die. Does a recurring memory merely play anew on our capacity for emotion, or do the emotions once felt remain for us as memories? I do not know. I think I must remember the emotions and not recreate them, because I am not now so sensitive to moral hurts as I once was. There is one curious trick which my sensations now and then play, and which I especially dread, and, strangely enough, it is connected with the only defect of memory to which I am ever subject. I can best illustrate this by relating an incident of my reportorial life.

Passing up an obscure street in New York, I saw a crowd around a doorway. I went, as was my business, to see what was the matter. A policeman who knew me, and who arrived at the same time, took me in with him through a window in the basement. It seemed that screams had been heard in the house, and those collected by the noise feared to enter. We went up a shabby staircase and finally found a door which was locked. As we stood near it, getting no answer to our demands to be let in, I suddenly grew faint, and a sensation of pure, causeless terror overcame me. I told my companion that I was ill, and ran down-stairs. Here I sat in a lower room, opened the window, and tried to think what it was that had thus disturbed me. The feeling that for once my memory was at fault was

agreeable to me, as it always is. In a few minutes I knew that I had simply remembered a mental state without getting hold of the causative fact. Then suddenly I was aware that it was the odor of blood which had caused me to remember—I should say, to feel again—the anguish of terror I had experienced when, as a child, I saw my father bleeding from a wound of the forehead. In a few moments the policeman came down to say that a brutal murder had been done in the room we had tried to enter. This leads me to add that my sense of smell is acute.

A few days after this I was walking up the Bowery of a cold night, when I found a group around a girl who had fallen on the slippery ice and hurt herself badly. Her face, as she lay pale under a gas-lamp, at once recalled one whom I had well known. With some help I got her into a hack, and took her home to a poor little lodging where she lived with her mother. She herself was a map-colorer, and the two were evidently folks who had seen better days. The following morning I went to see them, and then began for me a period of indescribable joy in my lonely life, and yet of as utter misery.

I was, at the time I speak of, thirty-one years old. When about twenty I had been engaged (foolishly, my father said, as I had not a cent) to a girl of quite ordinary character. It ended as such affairs are apt to do, and I suffered as a lad does. Another would in process of time have come out unhurt. As for me, it led me to avoid women. Not that I disliked them; they have more charity for peculiar people than men have. But every little tenderness, a movement, a turn

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of the head, brought back to me intense remembrances, and all their bitter emotional accompaniments.

Throughout our simple courtship I struggled with the demon of remorseless memory. If I touched her hand, there arose the many times when I had so touched the hand of the other woman, and when at last I kissed Helen, of a sudden I felt the older joy, as it were, alongside of this new one. The ghost of extinct passion haunted the sweetness of my new and better love. So mercilessly intense was my remembrance that I became giddy for a moment. I no longer loved the other woman, and yet the recollection of my joy at winning her was brought back by a like joy in a form so real as to puzzle and confuse me.

There is no need to exemplify this trouble in detail. It recurred so often that at last I told Helen. At first she seemed only amused, but very soon became annoyed, and, absurd as it may seem, jealous of the influence my fatal memory exerted. She insisted that I could control my thoughts. I became angry at last, and we parted. Strangely enough, this rupture was a relief to me.

It seemed to me, as I read the books about memory, that every memorial impression must materially alter the brain somewhere and somehow, and that very little change should be needed to lessen what must be so slight a record. And yet, alas! for me these records seem to be unalterably persistent.

In Professor Draper's work I found his illustration of how faint need be a material record to be permanent. He says: "Put a coin on a clean mirror. Breathe on both, and wait for the moisture to evapo-

rate; cast off the coin, put the glass aside for some days, and again breathe on the glass, and the outline of the coin will reappear." His illustration is good, but is as nothing to the delicacy of the memorial mind-marks.

I have said that I have small power to reason. I may add that I have no imagination. Memory is too implacable with me to admit of that. When I try to imagine in any of the forms described by Ruskin, I feel as though I am merely hustled by a rush of remembered facts. Every one is a poet in his sleep, but even in dreams I seldom see anything not possible, or even not clearly out of my memorial storehouse. Facts suggest only facts for me in my effort to reason deeply, and to drive a wedge in between two facts or remembrances, and thus to separate and hold and examine them comparatively is difficult. My mind associates too rapidly for mental valuations. Thus I am forbidden by my morbid accuracy of memory to be other than minutely truthful, and the effort to make use of the little lies which cement social intercourse is rendered hard. I am not unwilling to fib, but it hurts me to be inaccurate.

After reading Dr. Horatio Wood's articles on hashish, I decided to see if this drug might not help me. I took, at first, small doses, and at last a larger one. The result I shall never forget. I had been writing, and was suddenly aware that I had lost control of my mind, and faintly realized what had happened. In place of enfeebling my memory, the drug had reinforced it. With this came also a horribly strange sensation of the flight of time. Countless ages seemed to

go by as palpably as a rushing stream. Every moment seemed to be freighted with a load of memories, each mercilessly definite. I had, in fact, a sort of vertigo of reminiscences. It seemed to me that everything I had ever seen, read, or heard flashed into and through my consciousness. This ended my experiments. I am a miserable man.

WHEN I came to a close Clayborne was calmly sleeping. As I ceased, he wakened, and declared it to be very interesting.

"It is merely horrible," said Mrs. Vincent. "How welcome death must be to such a man! I can understand that he might kill himself."

"But perhaps death may also result in a vertigo of memories," I returned.

"Perhaps; yes. That indeed might give us pause."

VIII.

MRS. VINCENT, who did not love the sea, and whose dislike was reciprocated by very evil treatment on its part, was always glad to give her husband what she called a temporary divorce. She knew well how much the roughest sea voyage was his friend, and was well pleased when in summer she could persuade him to get away in his yacht.

"I have a note from Vincent," said St. Clair one day early in September. "He wants us to join him at Jamestown. Clayborne says this town is good enough. I believe he cools himself with the classic authors. At all events, go he will not."

I was happy in the chance of relief, having been detained in town all of August, and so it was that two days later we joined Vincent. We lived on his little vessel, sailed around Newport, and for a month lived a life of joyous freedom.

One day we started together to walk on Canonicut Island, across a country road which led away from the few houses on the shore. Gaining a little hilltop, we looked over at Narragansett and out to sea, or, turning, saw the Dumplings, the fort, and the quaint old

steeples of Newport above the white houses scattered along the bay.

The day was perfect, and it was quiet, too, with the stillness on sea and on land of a New England Sabbath. Presently, moving on, we overtook a small, slightly built woman, who was pausing here and there to gather wild flowers.

St. Clair asked her the road to Beaver Tail Lighthouse. She said it was a rather crooked way through gates and fields, and then, as Vincent drew near, exclaimed, "Oh, what a bit of luck to see you here!"

It was evident from his greeting that they were old acquaintances. He turned and presented us. "Miss M——," he said, "and will not you show us the way? For otherwise we are but lost men."

She smiled pleasantly, and said a few words to each in turn, in a manner quite hard to put in words, but which, however one might describe it, as gracious or generous, at once established mysteriously cordial relations with the hearer. It was easy to see in a few minutes that she had the rare gift of intellectual sympathy, perhaps I should have said of sympathy in most of its forms. The farmers we met in their Sunday black suits knew her, and their dogs came and jumped on her as if welcoming a friend. The little children cast up at her shy glances of acquaintance. As we walked along, she seemed to hear all that was said, and yet with wandering eyes to see all that earth, air, and sea had to show.

We passed through fields and open gates, and at last rested on a grass-bank by the roadside. On our left was a dense shrubbery of undergrowth, ferns

and scrub-oaks. The low lichen-stained walls bounded fields of perfect grass. Below us, to the left, the murmur of breaking waves came softly to the ear, and beyond, the open ocean lay intensely blue in the sun of noon.

St. Clair evidently interested our companion. He was in a mood of half-suppressed and joyous excitement, such as open air and nature at her best were apt to produce in him. "What a well-mannered day!" he said, looking around. "Such a nice reserve in its way. Here comes the wind out of the north, and says, I might be cold, but I am not; and the midday sun lets you know it might be warm, and is not. It is a day full of delicious possibilities, like—like—a nice woman."

I saw Vincent's eyebrows go up in faint amusement, and his face said clearly, "The dear fellow is off." Not so Miss M——. "What a pretty phrase!" she exclaimed, smiling. "A well-mannered day. I shall remember that. One has worn out weather phraseology."

"Oh," said I, "the thief,

> "She has the mystery of a morn in May,
> Nor hot nor cold,
> Nor ever grave, nor ever gay,
> Until her secret soul be told."

"Ah, they always laugh at me," cried St. Clair. "And as for Dr. North's quotations, who can trust them? He is a poet in disguise, and has a half-suppressed notion that poetry is a sort of asking of the alms of emotion, and not quite as reputable work as pretending to cure folks. The day may guard her

secret soul for me. The fair outside is enough. There is joy in the very air. It is a honeymoon of delight. Come, I am for the sea." And with this he rose and walked on ahead of us at a pace that soon left us far behind.

"What a glad face!" said Miss M——. "It has the most singular power of joyous expression. I remember, cousin Fred, your once speaking of him in Rome, of his intense power to feel; of his *camaraderie* with all natural objects (I think that was the word you used; it struck me as happy)."

"I am very fond of him," returned Vincent. "He is joyous by mere natural construction, a seer of things that escape us. I envy, without comprehending, his sensitiveness to innumerable impressions which escape uncaught through the coarser meshes of my mental net."

"What you say is quite true," I added; "and with it all there is a capacity for friendliness with every living thing which has often surprised me. He will quiet the fiercest dog, or take unhurt a handful of bees in his grasp. I have seen him handle a rattlesnake."

"In another man," said Vincent, "I should call his affection for trees or flowers an affectation. In him it seems entirely natural. I am an observer because I have learned to observe, but this close relation to the world of animate and inanimate things is like the tie of kindred. I can merely regard it with wonder."

"Why do you call them inanimate?" said Miss M——.

"Because they are."

"We may not be animate enough to know."

"I am not," returned Vincent. "I wish I were. Something I lose, and we cannot afford to lose any of the reasonable joys of life."

"You will never miss it," said Miss M——, "really miss it—I mean this nearness of relation to nature—as you will if ever a great misfortune should pass into your life, and become thenceforward a part of you—I may say, of your every fiber."

She spoke quietly, without any tone of self-allusion in her manner; but I turned to scan her face, and saw that as she spoke her eyes were set on the distant horizon, and at once understood that she spoke of herself.

"That is true," I said. "There is strange comfort in nature when man has none to profit you. I think we all must have felt with Victor Hugo the helpfulness of finding in nature such companionship in our moods as does give a certain, if mysterious, solace.

> "J'aime la roche solennelle
> D'où j'entends la plainte eternelle,
> Sans trève comme le remords,
> Toujours renaissant dans les ombres.

He is grieving over a debased and fallen France, and the sea is grieving with him."

"Yes," she said; "there are times when no human soul is tender enough, simple enough, or, if you like, subtle enough in its apprehensions, to be the friend we want—when man delights you not, nor woman either. It may be, it may seem to be, absurd to some, but there are days when to be alone with the sea, or solitary in the forest, consoles as nothing else can do on earth. I think," she went on, "that this mere loneliness with

nature has negative as well as positive values. One escapes from talk. That alone is an immense thing —one need not make reply to the glad babble of the waters."

"And for me," said Vincent, "there would be but one remedy—work."

"No," I returned. "Few men, and fewer women, while still near to a great sorrow, can find relief in work. Few have energy enough for this. Those who have strong characteristics run risks which not the sturdiest can afford to despise. I have seen many a man under the stress of grief break down with intense business occupation."

"And yet," said Vincent, "what else is there? Let us suppose that we have used as we may all that higher consolations can offer; what shall a man do who is stricken down with the loss of something the most dear to him on earth? Work would be my remedy."

"You might be able to bear it; many are. Time would probably answer with you, and do all that is possible. I fancy the means of relief must vary with the man. It is quite sure that for many physical action is of use, and often saves the sensitive from those outward expressions of emotion which for them, at least, are full of moral and even physical danger. After a while there comes a time when systematic work is of value; but I am sure that in days of sorrow some people are best left to themselves. The blow of grief, like that of the lion's paw, deadens the sense of its own hurt, and to urge physical exertion, work, or travel, or, in fact, anything, is vain or dangerous."

"Of course," said Vincent, "one's thoughts about these matters are chiefly of and for the nobler character. The mass of men suffer and get well without excess of sorrow."

"The thing we are after is, or ought to be," said Miss M——, "how to save the best natures from the inefficiency which sorrow sometimes brings in its train — the physical wreckage it makes."

"And, after all, is that common, North?"

"Common enough to be feared. But very often the inefficiency which it brings has other explanations. The dissolution of a partnership in life ruins or impairs the usefulness of the surviving partner. The dead gave something which was a complement essential to the usefulness of the remaining member of the firm. There are wives who supply judgment or common sense, or who in some way have the gift of energizing the husband, or of keeping him economical. She dies, and he is relatively valueless. Then people say it is grief, while very often he himself never fully comprehends what has happened to him."

"That is most true," said Vincent. "But to go back a little. Your remedy of contact with solitary nature must be only for the few, who have with it such relationship as you have been discussing. For some I am sure that travel has its value, because we are thus surrounded with distracting objects, and by people who may interest us without intruding on the solitude of ourselves. The loneliness of forest or sea would for me be madness under circumstances of such trouble as we are speaking of. Nature, not your nature, but

nature in the more inclusive sense, never invented La Trappe."

"It gets very complex as we go on," said Miss M——. "The fact remains that for many, for the sensitive, and often for others than the intellectual, the world of natural things has soothing ways and an inexplicable comfort not elsewhere to be found."

"It may be," returned Vincent. "What are those lines of which St. Clair is so fond?

> "Only on Nature's lap can some men weep,
> Only to her beloved gives she sleep;
> Her sympathy alone hath ever perfect touch,
> Men gives too little or he gives too much."

"Thank you," said Miss M——. "And where is your friend? We ought to be ashamed to use this perfect day for a talk so grave. Let us keep the rest of it for an east wind."

"And its consolations," laughed Vincent. "As to that I am at one with you. Its relations to me are despotic and disagreeable. Oh, there he is, the idle beggar. All Lombard street to a china orange, he has been making poetry. Halloo, St. Clair!"

Below the small lighthouse, on the rocks at the verge of the sea, the sculptor lay with his head over the edge, his face exposed to the full sunlight. The waves broke far out on a reef, and as they rose again with failing power just touched his head. He laughed with the glee of a truant boy. As we came down the rocks he sat up, shook the brine out of his hair as a dog does, looked about him, and said, "Oh, the treacherous sea! There it is."

The little black note-book he usually carried in his

pocket, having been laid on a rock, had been drifted off by a wave.

"Poetry gone to sea," said I; and while we laughed heartily at his look of solemn discomfiture Vincent hooked the soaked book ashore with his cane. St. Clair ruefully spread it out in the sun, while we made numerous suggestions as to the loss to the world. St. Clair said nothing until he looked up at Miss M——'s face. Then he exclaimed, "I think you could help me."

"Yes; men have no resources," she said, and, taking the book, went quietly up the shore and into the house attached to the light-tower.

"Epic or sonnet?" said Vincent.

"Sonnet," said St. Clair, tranquilly. "What bad men you are! Don't you know that was a real misfortune? Only women are entirely good. No man was ever so good as some women. Men reason themselves into goodness, but women—oh, I hate you both! Get away, do."

There was some fun and some earnestness in his phrases. Then he sat on the rock and threw stones at the billows as if for punishment, until Miss M——, who was gone for a full half-hour, came back.

"It is all right," said she, "only a little blurred and crumpled. It will serve now to keep me in remembrance."

He made no conventional mention of thanks, but looking up, only smiled as he put the book away. After this we sat on the rocks, saying little.

The sea was one vast round of sapphire set in the gray of the rocks and the sparkling grasses of the uplands. Out of the pine woods of the northland came

stronger every hour a great wind, and as the vast billows rose on the reef with white crests, it smote them so severely that the foam streamed southward in level lines.

At last Miss M—— said: "How much of this do you carry away, Dr. North? In memory, I mean, and distinctly."

I said: "My thoughts were far afield. I can see it in a manner when I close my eyes; not as I once could, when a child."

"It is with me almost as present with my eyes shut as now," said St. Clair, "and I shall not lose it. Just as I go to sleep is the time to recall a scene I once saw, but I cannot always keep it. It changes, or gives place to another. Is that common, North?"

"I am not sure. It is common with me; but although, like you, I can best recall a scene then, I cannot always do so. Something else appears, and then that too changes. There must be a law deducible, but as it is, with what we now know, I cannot explain the facts."

"And have you," said Miss M——, "certain habitual dreams? I have."

"Yes. I used to fancy I would collect experiences on this subject. My own are often professional. I make an error in a prescription; or, about to lecture, find in my portfolio a fairy tale."

"They would be equal in value a hundred years hence," laughed Vincent.

"Too true," I returned. "A very common dream with me is to feel that I float above the ground, always a foot or two above it. It is most agreeable."

"Oh, I do that," said Miss M——.

"Yes? And you like the sensation as you have it in your dream?"

"Certainly. But I had no idea it was a frequent delusion; for it is such with me, and a very complete delusion. Sometimes I seem to have no legs at all, and to be a spirit afloat."

"It reminds me," said Vincent, "of that queer tale of a man who lost both arms and both legs in the war. How was it the story ended, Owen?"

"He is carried to a spiritual séance, and there invited to choose what spirits he would call up. With a great deal of sense he requested his legs to reappear, and immediately was able to walk about the room. He described his gait as rather uncertain, but explained it by the fact that both legs had been for two years in the Government Museum, preserved in alcohol. The fun of it was that this absurd story was accepted by spiritualists as a new proof of the truth of their doctrine."

"Oh, not really!" exclaimed Miss M——.

"Yes. He had letters thanking him and asking for details. But, in fact, the autobiography, as a whole, deceived many, although it was written without the least desire to mystify. In one place a sum of money was collected for the poor victim."

"I think I must have read the story," remarked Miss M——.

"Just now," said Vincent, "I have in my sensitive center a waking dream to the effect that my less noble organs have been long vacant of food."

"Indeed?" said Miss M——. "Then let us go. But first, Mr. St. Clair, may I confess you?"

"Yes; surely."

"You have been making verses."

"They make themselves; sometimes in a vague, disconnected way, sometimes so as to stay in my mind and bother me like bad children until I hear and heed."

"And have you heeded to-day? and may I hear what the children of the brain have said?"

"If it will be pleasant to you."

"It will."

Then he quietly repeated these lines:

BEAVER TAIL ROCKS.

Fare forth, my soul, fare forth and take thine own;
The silver morning and the golden eve
Wait, as the virgins waited to receive
The bridegroom and the bride with roses strewn.
Fare forth and lift her veil, the bride is joy alone.
To thee the friendly hours with her shall bring
The changeless trust that bird and poet sing;
Her dower to-day shall be the asters sown
On breezy uplands, hers the vigor brought
Upon the north wind's wing, and hers for thee
A stately heritage of land and sea,
And all that nature hath, and all the great have thought.
And she shall whisper, like a sea-born shell,
Things that thy love may hear, but never tell.

Vincent was silent, and I merely nodded to the poet. He understood me always.

"Is it good? Is it bad, Miss M——?" he said. "I do not know."

"It is the spirit of this joyous day for me set somehow in words," Miss M—— replied. "It likes me. I always think that such a pretty phrase. I don't quite care to discuss the verses. Send them to me, will you?"

St. Clair nodded gaily, and we rose and went our way.

Over the grass, through swaying primroses, among the bowing plumes of goldenrod and aster came the hearty north wind, as we went across the stone-walled fields and saw the quiet bay and the gray lines of the fort.

A farmer on the fence with his pipe took off his hat to Miss M——. She asked about his crops.

"There 's been a heap of grass, marm, this year, and corn was never better. But this here farm of mine 's the best on the island."

"And he thinks he owns it," said St. Clair, apart. "And yet the best of it to-day is yours and mine, and stem or flower of that will he never own, nor sea nor sky. I have known princes who did not own their great old galleries of pictures."

"What it is to be a poetical Marquis of Carrabas!" laughed Vincent. "I am not of that famous family. Gracious, it is four o'clock!"

At the town Miss M—— left us. Then I asked Vincent who she was.

"Miss M——," he said, "is a far-away cousin of mine — very distant, in fact. A New England woman. During the war the man she was to have married was killed at Fair Oaks. Since then her life has been one of the widest charity. Strangely enough, this slight, gentle woman with her quiet ways has a remarkable control over the criminal classes. The good she has done is past belief, and how it is that she understands and influences these ruined outcasts I cannot even dimly comprehend."

"I can," said St. Clair. "I am wicked enough to understand. I could tell that woman anything."

"And how swiftly apprehensive she is," I added; "and yet, despite her quickness, a patient hearer, and that, I think, is rare. Quick-witted folks are apt to be impatient. It needs the finest manners to keep them free from the appearance of showing that they have anticipated your explanations. They are very likely to be a trifle annoyed at overfulness of statement, just as a slightly deaf man is at your speaking too loud."

"I think," said Vincent, "it is rather the dull to whom you try to make things a little too clear who resent it as the deaf man does a loud voice. Was not your comparison rather misapplied here?"

"Perhaps so; but it is enough that you understand me."

"I should like to know that woman better," said St. Clair, "and never may. That is the worst of life."

While eating our belated lunch we ran down past Beaver Tail, and then away toward the pretty tints of Gay Head, and at last, crossing over past the beech woods of Naushon, came to anchor in the moonlight in the haven of Wood's Holl. There, on deck, in the calm of a September night (for the north wind had blown itself out), we fell by and by again into chat about the chance companion of the morning.

Lying upon long cushions on deck with our pipes' the water sparkling below us with luminous life, for a while no one spoke, until, at last, St. Clair said: "The wonder to me is how that woman took up the threads of activity and wove anew the warp and woof of life. Was the man she lost worth having?"

"He was of the best," replied Vincent. "A person of resolute character and positive convictions. He entered the army as a private, and was a colonel when he died."

"And she has made herself what we have seen and have heard to-day?"

"Yes," said Vincent; "but she has one peculiarity —at first sight an odd one. She is not very fond of children. Their needs and claims she recognizes, of course, but she prefers to help men and women. I never could understand that in one so tender."

"I think I do," I returned. "She has never again thought of marriage, and the contact with these little ones arouses, I suspect, all the sense of sadness she must have at feeling that the vast instincts of maternity can never be gratified. The sentiment is subtle, but real. Men can with difficulty understand the immense instinctiveness of the true woman nature. When her life is fulfilled in marriage and motherhood, everything tends to cultivate her instincts. In the man's life, everything tends to lessen their influence, and will with the woman, in proportion as she takes to the sterner pursuits of man."

"You are, no doubt, right," said Vincent. "It makes one think of her with renewed pity."

"And how it would all have destroyed some women," said I. "When I write my famous book on the conduct of life, I shall have to consider disaster in its relation to character."

"It gives a man," cried St. Clair, "a horrible sense of responsibility to hear you fellows talk, as if events were nothing and the man everything."

"Why, in your way," laughed Vincent, "you are the most obstinate little rascal conceivable."

"I!" said St. Clair. "I am kicked about by circumstances; I am bullied by events. Experience does me no good, and all the moral tonics disagree with me. My—what do you call it, North?—oh, my idiosyncrasy is tremendously idiosyncratic."

"Oh, stop him," cried Vincent, laughing. "Take his pipe away; do something."

"I am a happy accident. Indeed, I am a series of happy accidents. I never had a real trouble in my life. And how delicious the night is! I am for a swim, and to bed."

Nevertheless, he stood by the mast awhile, and then said, "How stupid it is without women," and then presently broke out in his clear tenor, a voice not very accurate, and of no great strength, but of passionate sweetness:

Good night! Good night! Ah, good the night
That wraps thee in its silver light.
Good night! No night is good to me
That does not bring a thought of thee—
Good night!

Good night! Be every night as sweet
As that which made our love complete;
Till that last night when death shall be
One brief good night for you and me—
Good night!

A minute later the singer went overboard into the glory of luminous gold, amidst which he swam, laughing out his joy as he smote the water into light. The next day we left Vincent and returned home together.

IX.

N a quiet Sunday afternoon Vincent, St. Clair, and I were wandering in the park. St. Clair was amusing himself over Clayborne's peculiarities. "I wonder," he cried, "that he needs any friends, considering the many great and famous folks with whom he associates in his library. I think that his books are more real to him than are we. He even comes near to poetry when he talks of them. I know they affect him as they do but few. I declare to you, I can tell of an evening what kind of books he has been reading. You know he is capable of awful exercise in this way, and will read straight through a day play after play of the Greek dramatists, while dressing, and at meals, never leaving the house. I have known him to read all of Bossuet without pause, and when I asked him once what he had been doing the past week, he said he had gone through Bernal Diaz del Castillo (what a noble name!), Southey's 'Brazil,' and a beautiful tome, the size of a small house, about Peru, by one Garcilaso de la Vega. He showed it to me. It has horrible pictures of Incas burned alive. I tried the work on Brazil a few minutes. Alas!"

To this long discourse about our friend Vincent and

I listened with much amusement as we strolled in perfect weather under the trees and along the west bank of the river in our great city park.

The park, clotted with groups of happy people enjoying the quiet and the green stillness of the trees, was yet so vast as in nowise to trouble us by their number, or to take away from the pleasant sense of ownership we have in our many-acred domain.

Said Vincent presently, "And you think, my dear fellow, you can tell what literary society Clayborne has been keeping?"

"Oh, I can; indeed, I can, sometimes. One evening (it was a month ago) he had very fine manners. He has n't very good manners usually, but this time he quite reminded me of—well, of you, Vincent."

"Oh, really," said our friend; "of me?"

"Yes; and it turned out that he had been, as one might say, to call on Mme. de Sévigné, and had met Beaumarchais rather later, and La Rochefoucauld. He hates poetry,—all modern verse at least,—or I would lend him my Villon, just to see what a delightful scamp he would come to be for an evening."

"It is a wonder that he can endure you at all," said I. "Nothing annoys him more than vain questions, as he calls them; and for a fact, St. Clair, you have a distinct capacity in that line."

"I know it. He does n't mind telling me. He says I am like an intelligent child; that I come, like Hamlet's papa, in questionable shape; and such other felicities of abuse."

Much amused, I glanced from him to Vincent's face of sympathetic mirth. The poet had a look of child

like joy at the remembrance of being looked upon by Clayborne as a troublesome infant. He had what Vincent called an instinctive nature, and the world seemed to teach him no lessons, and experience to fail as a schoolmaster. Yet, on the whole, I think he was of us all the most happy.

I never saw any one quite like him in the infantile way in which he could be influenced for the time by his associations; and in bad society he had been known to be very naughty. But this neither lasted very long, nor affected him in a permanent manner; and with us he was ever at his best, which to me at least, and to Vincent, was always better than the best of most able men, for in his double way of sculptor and poet he was distinctly a man of genius.

Evidently both Vincent and I were at one and the same time thinking, with our companion as a text, for the former said presently:

"Your notion about Clayborne is very amusing."

"And just what do you mean?"

"Oh, what you said of Clayborne. I was thinking about it. Your statement of the peculiarity was—well, rather poetical, and yet measurably true. The intercourse of men does not influence his ways or conduct, but the quality of the books he has been reading does appear in his thought and manner."

"Is it not," said I, "an instance of the automatic imitativeness one observes as so variously influential in life? It is men who thus affect me. If I am with a man of noble manners, I too become stately in my fashions for the hour; and with rough-mannered men I find I must be on my guard."

"Yes; I know that—I know that," returned St. Clair, ruefully.

"Great genius," said I, "perhaps only the greatest, escapes the influence of this animal quality of imitativeness; but you can still see it in the youth of the poets, and sometimes even later. I should like to see an essay on the 'Relations of the Poet to Poets.' They are nearly all ignorantly, or of purpose, imitative in their early verse."

"But is it not interesting, too," returned St. Clair, "to notice how the individuality of the man may still exist with unconscious imitation? I wonder if Wordsworth knew how much of Scott got into his splendid ballad of 'The Feast of Brougham Castle'; and yet there are lines in it which only Wordsworth could have written."

"And," said I, "is n't there a ring of Byron's vigorous march of verse in those lines I love so well, 'Fleet the Tartar's reinless steed'?"

"The same tendency to borrow form or matter is in the early compositions of the great musicians," remarked St. Clair. "At least, so I am told."

"It is very human, no doubt," I returned; "and of course one sees it intensified to morbidness in disease—in hysteria, and in rare cases of insanity, where a man repeats automatically the words he hears, or the gestures of the man at whom he chances to be looking."

"Are there really such cases?" Vincent asked.

"Yes; I have caught even myself repeating unconsciously the facial spasm of a man I was intensely watching. The subject of hypnotism is very apt to be the victim of suggestion, and to have set free that

imitative instinct which we usually keep under control. In fact, these cases are often the mere sport of varied forms of suggestion. If, without other hint, you pinch together the frontal muscles of one of these sleepers, so as to imitate the facial expression of a frown, he will at once become angry, perhaps furiously so, and swear, or strike a blow. If you make his cheek-lines assume the curves of mirth, this suggests amusement, and he roars with laughter. He is delicately susceptible to the hint, and responds at once."

"Then, probably," said Vincent, "to allow our features to assume the first slight expression of passion is a step toward failure of self-control, because what is true of the morbid in a high degree must be true in a measure of the wholesome."

"Yes; one sees that in emotional people. The yielding to tears is the first step down a bad staircase, where, soon or late, serious trouble from loss of moral balance awaits the feeble."

"And to yield," said Vincent, "is to make at last a habit. Repeated resistance to the slighter physical expressions of emotion must end in making self-control easy."

"Yes; that is true. It is the constant lesson we have, as doctors, to teach the hysterical. They are always in danger of being trampled on by their emotions. They can take no risks. For them even excess of mirth is dangerous. What the children call a 'gale of laughter' ends abruptly in an explosion of tears, and then the brakes are off, and away they go."

"Pathos is the very shadow of humor," returned Vincent. "We all know that, and yet the grave be-

gets the gay more surely than the reverse occurs. It seems curious that the expressions of the two states should in nervous people reverse the rule of succession. I mean that these should tend more readily to pass from mirth to tears."

"That is not accurately correct," I said. "Tears with them beget laughter, and the opposite is also true."

"You men are getting out of my depth," cried St. Clair. "I hate self-control except in other people. It creates habits, and I loathe them. The only habit I have is the habit of having no habits; one inherits too many as it is. There is a nice story in that big book on Brazil; it is the only thing I got out of it. It will answer to kill your large talk. An ancient Indian convert of the Jesuits, at Para, was sick to death, and being asked by the good padre what delicacies he would like to comfort him on his way to purgatory, said, 'I should like the tender hand of a Tapuya boy, well broiled.'"

"Certainly it illustrates the permanence of original habits," said Vincent, laughing. "But habit—"

"Oh, don't begin again," cried St. Clair, who professed to detest psychological talk. "Look at what you are missing."

"You are right," returned Vincent. "'Your solid man sees not the sky.' Is n't that Emerson?"

"Yes," said St. Clair; "and his is also, 'Show me thy face, dear Nature, that I may forget my own.' That is what this is good for."

As he spoke, he led us through a hedge of underbrush, and we came out on a green space with groups

of stately tulip-trees and oaks. A little beyond them a marble-paved spring welcomed us. Overhead were maples of great size and breadth of wholesome leafage. Their roots were peeping out in white fibrous bunches into the half-choked spring, alongside of which St. Clair threw himself at length, while Vincent and I sat down on the grass at a little distance. For a while we said nothing. The clouds mottled the sunshine on the woods and turf as they sailed overhead, and the waters, finding a voice with their new birth, troublously whirled around the stone-built pool, and gurgled out through an irregular latticework of roots, murmuring more and more noisily as they tumbled down the slope.

Meanwhile I watched our poet's face. His cap was off, and below the crown of brown half curls his face expressed in its varying lines a sense of the joy he felt. I knew that he was more near akin to it all than we.

As I looked, Vincent called my attention to a tree near by, and, rising, for a few minutes we wandered away. As we returned, I touched Vincent's arm, and we stood silently observant. St. Clair lay on his back beside the spring, dabbling in it with his hand, his head against the rising bank of turf. I had seen him in such a mood before. He was improvising. Quite unconscious of our presence, he broke out into verse, and then fell away to prose again, or let fall a rime.

"I see it, I hear it; a fawn I be, and this is my playmate, new-born like me. A fawn on the hillside, a brooklet is he. How the water finds a voice, and warbles meaningless things; sobs and cries like an infant

just born! I break the clear mirror, I prance in the stream; I laugh with its laughter, I dream with its dream. It does not wait for me, my new playmate. It is off and away: past rocks we go, twin-leaping things, until at the cliff-verge I see it spring from the edge. I dare not to follow the curve of its leap. I hear its wild cry. Is it dead or asleep? 'Mid the ferns far below lies a quiet smoothness, so still, ah, so still! Are you dead, pleasant comrade? Then with fear I go down, with my sharp ears intent, until far away on the grass-slopes I find my little friend. I see it trickle out of the rocks in jets, and remake itself again, and go athwart the slope, joyously tossing the grasses on its way. Then I know that my new-born friend can take no harm, and is as the gods—immortal."

"Is this the way they make verse?" whispered Vincent.

We need not have feared to disturb him. St. Clair was at times more simple than a child with its mother. He turned, in no wise embarrassed. The mood of wrapt, fanciful thought was gone, and, sitting up, he said pleasantly, "Ah, you heard me. By Zeus! but a fawn I was for the moment." Meanwhile Vincent looked on, in his face a faint expression of withheld surprise at the naturalness of the man.

"Were I you, I would carve me a new-born fawn by the just-born fountain," said I, "and put your mood in verse on the rock near by."

"I could not," cried St. Clair; "I could not. The song is gone. To sing it anew, I should have to recapture the mood, and that is impossible.

"I heard a bird in the air above
Sing, as he flew, a song of love.
To earth, from heaven overhead,
All the soul of love it said;
But the bird is gone, the song is dead,
And heaven is empty overhead.
If I were the bird, or the song were I,
I may not know until I die,
And somewhere in the world to be,
Chant again, with soul set free,
Its rapture of felicity."

"Whose is that?" said I.

"Mine. I made it for you now as it came. I like it; I shall not to-morrow. Do you like it, Vincent?"

"My dear fellow, I have been shaking myself up inwardly like a kaleidoscope to see if I could get my confused mental atoms, by happy chance, into some form of sympathy with you and yours. I cannot."

"And," said the joyous face looking up at him, "it seems to you nonsense. Does n't it, now?"

"Not that, not just that, but incredible, curious; and, frankly, I do not care about it as a product. I see it gives you and others pleasure. It gives me little. Sometimes I like the verses which jingle agreeably."

"O Vincent! Well—"

"Yes; I suppose rime is the sugar of verse, but I soon find it is only the sugar I am liking, and at the end I can't tell what it all meant."

"He has been reading Swinburne," cried St. Clair. "A wild debauch of rime and rhythms, and the sense gets seasick on a rolling ocean of rhythmic billows. I hate him. You like Owen Meredith. I know it; I am sure," he added, with mild scorn.

"Well, yes," said Vincent, smiling. "I do—sometimes—a little—not much."

"It is a demi-mundane creature, not a poet at all."

"I can read Milton and Browning—some of him—and Pope," said Vincent, defensively.

"And the greatest—what of them?" said I. "We may as well know all your wickedness."

"Oh, those. Those are the revelations. 'The gods who speak in men.'"

"And Wordsworth?" said St. Clair, wistfully, and as if he were tenderly mentioning some well-loved woman. "Out with it!"

"And Wordsworth?" repeated Vincent. "Do not fear that I shall be so commonplace as to sneer at him. Yes; I can read him. But how was it that he could fly to-day and crawl to-morrow—never seemed to know if he were in heaven or of the merest earth? Tell me why so many poets lack power to criticize their own work, and yet the making of it presupposes critical labor soon or late. The poem you began to quote from Wordsworth the other day I had never chanced upon. I went home, and read and learned it. The first two verses I care less for, but the last is like a storm for vigor, like a trumpet for power to stir you; and yet I do not see them in any of the volumes of selections."

"Say them," said St. Clair.

"I can. You of course know them; they record the fate of the French armies in Russia.

> "Fleet the Tartar's reinless steed,
> But fleeter far the pinions of the wind,
> Which from Siberian caves the monarch freed,
> And sent him forth, with squadrons of his kind,

And bade the snow their ample backs bestride,
And to the battle ride.
No pitying voice commands a halt,
No courage can repel the dire assault;
Distracted, spiritless, benumbed, and blind,
Whole legions sink — and, in one instant, find
Burial and death: Look for them — and descry,
When morn returns, beneath the clear blue sky,
A soundless waste, a trackless vacancy.

How the first line tramps through one's brain, and how solemn is the silence in which the ending leaves you! Pardon me, St. Clair, if again I am stupid enough to wonder how he who struck this note could—"

"No, no, Fred!" exclaimed the poet. "The children of the brain are like the children of the body. You say that is a fine lad, and how crooked is his sister. Do you think the father feels responsible?"

"Ah, my dear St. Clair, illustrations are full of peril. Verse has no grandfathers, and, really, I think some of your master's acknowledged offspring might have been left at his doorstep in a basket by—by—"

"Now, take care!" laughed St. Clair.

"Well, by some Muse of easy virtue."

The poet laughed, and then said thoughtfully: "The answer lies here. All the great poets have written much. That is as if you were to say that you or I talk much. Verse is their natural mode of expression, and there being in many of them a childlike despotism of temperament which the world cannot subdue, they sing what they feel, or think, or desire. That is all of it, Vincent—or one word more. This must result in the product being often poor. But then a time comes when health, joy, opportunity, sugges-

tion, nourish the prosperous hour, and something great is done."

"But," urged Vincent, "why cannot they, like other men, see where and how they have failed, and then suppress for us the mass of stuff they leave us?"

"Let me answer him," said I. "For the lover of verse there is less of this than you think, and among the worst products of the best men there are lines one would not lose. This is true even of the lesser poets —Crabbe, Somerville. I should be glad to have written those lines on a good physician,

> "And well he knew to understand
> The poor man's cry as God's command.

Yet, who reads Somerville?"

"Remember, too," said St. Clair, "that self-criticism is a thing in its fulness impossible. A man would have to forget and live again. The poem is, for the writer, a thing made up of the poem and the remembrance of all that went to form it—the joy, the pain, and what not. It has for him the delightfulness the new-born child has for the mother. A poet once said to me, 'I make my poems swiftly, when in the mood, and afterward, except as to minor verbal changes, am about as helplessly uncritical as is a bird of its song. Always my last is for me my best, and then in a year I cease to love it. But, surely, as nurses say, my last poem puts out of joint the noses of all the rest.'"

"I have not heard that bit of nursery-talk since I was a boy," said Vincent. "It is more meaningless than most of our childish folk-lore. But you have not answered me; you have only restated the facts."

"I think I have answered you," said St. Clair; "and you must remember that what another says of a poet's verse (however just the comment) is to the poet as mere babble. And then, too, the great critics are more rare than the great poets, which is curious to me, but I think true."

"Some one should write the history of criticism," said Vincent.

"Do you know Dallas—'The Gay Art'?"

"No, or rather yes; it is an unreadable book, despite its learning. Even Clayborne could hardly stand a full dose of it. I read a goodly part of it with wonder and fatigue."

"I doubt," said St. Clair, "if any man who writes were ever the better for the critics—I mean as a writer."

"That appears to me absurd," said Vincent. "A good course of Sainte-Beuve might make you believe that such a thing should be possible, unless all men who write are idiots."

"But in this country," I urged, "we have only one critic worth the name, and he has no ear except for the past.* Yes; we could give up one half of our authors for a critic like the author of the 'Causeries du Lundi.' Come, let us go. Come." And we moved through the field and into a noble woodland.

"Look at that creeper," said St. Clair. "An English friend wrote me last year to ask what I meant by

"Autumn vines
Ablaze within the somber pines."

* And now, alas! since these lines were written, he, too, belongs to the past.

"And pretty hard it must be on the Canadian poets," laughed Vincent, "that along the rivers of New Brunswick the wild rose has no thorns. There is a frog-pond below us. Just hear them; they speak all the tongues. The American boy calls them 'bloody nouns.' Do they say that?"

"They do," said I, "and anything else you please. I wonder what Russian frogs say; the Greek frog is immortal. I once fell in with some ex-rebel brigadiers in North Carolina, and, among other good things, I carried away one delightful frog story. I wish I could give it the flavor of the very pleasant Southern tongue.

"The Yankee soldier, settled in Roanoke Island after the war, complains of his fate.

"'No, sir; I don't git on, I 'm that bothered. I don't mind bein' shot at—used to that; and I don't mind cussin'—cusses is soft sort of things. But when a fellow 's tired 'bout sundown, and ye gits seated on a smooth-topped fence-rail, and tucks yer toes under the third rail, and lights yer corn-cob pipe, and is jus' comfortable, and ye git to thinkin' of the ole home and the apple-orchard and bees—then them thar derned grayback frogs commences. And one of 'em he says, "Bull Run!" and another he says, "Ball's Bluff!" and at las' one little cuss gits up on his toes 'way out in the ma'sh, and he says, "Cheeckahominy!" I can't stand them there frogs. I 'm jus' goin' to leave.'"

"The story is rapidly improving under your hands," said Vincent.

"For shame," I returned. "What ingratitude!"

"Odd, is n't it," said St. Clair, "that every one has a

kind of tender feeling for frogs, and worse than none for toads?"

"I admit it," said I. "I loathe toads. As a fact, they secrete from the skin-glands an acrid and quite deadly poison; if for defense or not, I cannot say. But come, it is getting late."

"One moment," said Vincent. "Before we go, do look at these trees. Really, there are few such collections of unusual trees. These cypresses are old friends of mine; this must be their northern limit."

"Of course they are not natives," I said. "And they have lost their southern habit of sending up little conical shoots from the roots—what they call 'knees' in the South—a puzzle to the botanists."

"Probably want of moisture has to do with their absence here, because our monumental cypress at Bartram's garden in wet ground has numberless knees. Only a few miles from here stands the most northern papaw-tree."

"Do you remember," I said to Vincent, "that it was under that great cypress you and I first met?"

"I do, and pleasantly well I remember. We were only lads then. You were looking up at its vast branchings with your hat off. You uncovered as you approached it."

"It is a feeling I often have that I must uncover to a tree like that. I have always felt grateful to the sturdy old fellow who silently introduced us to each other."

"That 's rather nice," said St. Clair. "About trees we are all of a mind. I wonder there never was a tree worship."

"And," I added, "what various pleasure one gets out of them, how many kinds of joy."

"I have said before," remarked Vincent, "where my own limitations lie. My pleasure is in simple observation. When people talk of books which influenced them, I gratefully think that it was Ruskin who taught me what to see, how to see, and the happiness of it. Then I would come to a place where he spread wings of a larger delight, and left me sighing."

"One should train children to see," I said; "really to see. What is to be had in the way of enjoyment out of the trained powers of the naturalist none know who are not familiar with the higher grade of such students."

"And that I can more easily comprehend," returned Vincent.

"You ought to know Leidy,"* I said. "You remember my speaking once of his memory for specific names. As were Agassiz and Wyman, so is he today a delightful companion. He would stand here and call by name every living thing, and the stones beneath your feet also. Turn over a bit of rock, and as the queer tiny menagerie of its sheltered life scuttles out, he knows them one and all — their lives, their marriages, what they eat, their ways, their deaths, a hundred little dramas of this swarming vitality. And then the knowledge is all so easily given, with so much placid enjoyment, with such childlike directness, and yet with but little sense of the deeper poetic relationships which they bring to a rare few. He has the morale of the best naturalists — simplicity, earnestness,

* This greatest of our naturalists is since dead.

and magnanimity. To help others to observe is his greatest joy, and, my dear St. Clair, he does not really care a sixpence for all the poetry from Homer to Longfellow."

"Poor fellow," said the sculptor. "If that is where science takes a man, leave me to my folly."

"Happy man!" said Vincent. "Come, the dew is falling; let us go."

"The dew is condensing on the chilled earth, Mr. Philosopher," I said. "It only falls for poets."

"Come," said St. Clair; "I am tired."

After this the talk died out, and in the shadows we wandered along the river-bank until the lights of the town appeared in lanes of red on the water and in a broad glow of luminous reflection from the sky above.

X.

SOMETIMES it happened that I saw often one or another of the three men I called friends. Vincent and I were both busy. St. Clair was at times invisible for days; was shut up with statues, or away alone on the hills or by the sea. He used to say: "Every man has need at times of a monastic life. If he cannot make one for himself, he must be a poor creature. If I were married, I should desire divorce for six months in each year."

As to Clayborne, he was always accessible, and, as I have said, Vincent alone was married. I myself had had in earlier life a great trouble. For months it had left me like one who has been near to death, and escaped. In fact, it came close to being the foolish death of all tender sentiment, of all respect for women. From this I had the wholesome logical recoil brought about by the tremendous business called war. It saved me from a fate worse than its bullets prepared for me. That Vincent and his wife knew my story helped to increase my intimacy with him. We, too, were also of the busy world of men and affairs, in which St. Clair and Clayborne had no share, the one being in-

different, the other mildly scornful. None of us were what I call ordinary men; and, indeed, Vincent used to say that, to complete our group, we needed some merely good fellow, who would represent the commonplace and commercial aspects of every-day life.

I called one morning upon Vincent on my way to the hospital. He came down to his library at once, and made me welcome with the cordiality which has so much value in a man by habit reserved and tranquil.

"Ah," said he, "since you have been away our poor iron-worker is able to move about on crutches, and is going to make a little money out of his patent. St. Clair is anywhere. As to Clayborne, he is just now writing like mad. Some fellow in Berlin says he has made grave errors in facts in that last book. You should see him; you would think the man had physically insulted him."

"And the good wife?" I said.

"Oh, well; and, by George! North, she has another young woman in training for you. Look out. It will be the woman you take in to dinner the first time you dine here."

"'Who feels the warmth escapes the fire.' Come in to-night; I have an ocean of talk dammed up for you. Come late."

"I will. I meant to see you on a professional matter; it will keep until then."

As we went through the hall, Mrs. Vincent appeared on the stair. "How lucky to catch you! How well you look! Come and dine on Friday night. You need not think about it. I say yes for you; it is settled."

Vincent smiled.

I said, "It were useless to hesitate over so implacable a fate," and went away.

That evening, late, I sat in what the American doctor calls his office, but which was for me rather a library, as the many tools my work required were kept out of view in another room. I had none of Clayborne's desire to be walled in with books. The few I loved best, a couple of hundred, were on one wall in low shelves. Another case was full of dictionaries (of which I am fond), and the walls were covered above with pictures, prints, etchings, and the hundred memorials of a life of war, travel, and varied tastes and interests.

"I want at least an hour," said Vincent, as he entered.

"Then give me first ten minutes, Fred," I said. "I have some notes to answer. I can write and talk, too, in a way."

I gave such orders as would leave us undisturbed, and went on with my work, while Vincent, putting a portfolio on the table, took a cigar and wandered about the room.

"If you really do not mind my talking—"

"Oh, no; not in the least."

"Well, if I say anything worth answering you may reply or not. You have been shifting your pictures, I see. We both have that fancy for rearrangement. I like to prowl about a man's living-room; there is a sense of animal freedom in the name he gives it,—a den,—and yours is full of the bones of things past. Few women get much character into their rooms. The very derivation of the name they bear is unamiable.

I could tell that you have the taste of the savage for pronounced color, and for disorder, too."

"Go on," I said, laughing. "I shall presently have my whole biography evolved out of my surroundings. I simply loathe the precision of that table of yours."

"Yes," said Vincent; "no doubt. It would annoy me to have it otherwise, and I prefer to pamper my own feelings rather than at their cost to coddle my friend's sentiments. I am naturally selfish."

"Cold and indifferent," I went on.

"So says the world; but, really, I do not think I am. I am as tender inside as a crab, and sometimes I get into the soft-shell state, and then alas! But as for you," he added, "it is quite true that your room is characteristic, at least of your tastes—even of your sentiments. Your table represents order amidst appearance of disorder. I should say you had trained yourself to be methodical from absolute need to be so. Also you are a hero-worshiper."

"Am I? I could wish it were more common. But," I added, dropping my pen, "I have done. You have not yet noticed the new bronze of one of my heroes." I directed his attention to a mask of Lincoln.

He stood a moment regarding it with interest. "Curious, that," he remarked. "The side face smiles; there is humor in it. That is an immense help in a serious life. It is the gentlest and wisest of critics. And the full face is grave and homely."

"Do you see any resemblance to the masks of Cromwell?"

"Faintly. And to Luther, who resembled Lincoln

strongly in some ways; but the German face was coarser."

"To Lincoln," I said, "humor was both sword and shield; and yet he escaped that evil influence which for some who possess it largely makes men like Greeley absurd, or too ridiculous for charitable treatment."

"It seems to me to have been intellectually helpful to the man. Certainly it aided him to understand a people who are at once the gravest on earth and the most humorous."

"I suspect," said I, "that it plays a larger part on the stage of life, even of the largest lives, than men suppose, and, assuredly, it is a quality which asserts itself even when death is near. Its absence is fatal to some careers."

"There is none of it in this other hero of yours—in his face, at least," returned Vincent, turning to look at a noble portrait of William Harvey.

"Not in the face," I said, "nor in his life as we knew it until quite lately. But in his notes for lectures on anatomy, just published, there is plenty of it. Very early in his career, not remote from the date of Shakspere's death, he must have been pretty surely aware of the true doctrine of the circulation of the blood, but, although he discussed it for his class, he waited many years before he put it into print. Imagine such reticent patience in these noisy days of hurry and scramble to get the last novelty into print, lest it should be found out and made public by some one else. Haste does not belong to genius. That has the patience which seems to have been assigned by nature

to all forms of the creative faculty. For the gods, and for genius, time is not."

"How un-English the face is," said Vincent. "The type is that of a New England professor. The hands are badly drawn."

"No; that is the gout. The painter knew better than to manufacture hands for him. You are right in the belief that he is one of my heroes. He had every quality I should desire. He was grave, but humorous; gentle, but courageous; magnanimous, truthful, patient, and religious; and, above all, simple. I said he had humor. Some idiots have been saying of late that Bacon wrote Shakspere's plays. One point settled it for me. Humor is a light no man can hide. Bacon has none of it, and it is everywhere in Shakspere."

"The point," said Vincent, "as we lawyers put it, is well taken."

"Here are Harvey's lecture notes," I went on. "The other day I reread his life by Willis. Unluckily, we know little of him, and grave text-books of science give small chance for play of humorous thought; but in these notes we catch him in a familiar hour. See how crabbed is the English hand of that day. The notes, you see, are a medley of Latin and English. He has set down headings and hints for illustrations. The humor is quaint. An acid taste rising from the stomach into the mouth reminds him of a motion from the Lower to the Upper House of Parliament—'*ventris inferni*' (nasty), he says, 'yett recompensed by admiry' (admirable variety). The brain is the parlor, the stomach the kitchen, and so on. But what is it you want, Fred?"

"I want a little professional help. Last week a woman came to consult me, a slight, tall person, remarkably graceful, rather pretty, and, I may say, well-bred—a lady. She said that the case she wished to lay before me was of a criminal nature. I replied that I did not practise in the courts of criminal law.

"She returned at once, 'No, I was aware of that; but I need a gentleman, a man of my own class, and, above all, one capable of imagining as possible what seems to most men incredible.'

"I said at once, 'Sit down.' Her evident intelligence, her calmness of statement, and her pretty manners excited my sympathy. I begged her to go on. She was a better witness than most, but her story was a long one. I have condensed it into a few pages. I will read them. Make your comments, or, better, note them for discussion afterward.

"Seven years ago J. C——, aged thirty, married a woman of twenty in a Western city. She was rich, very rich, I may say, and in person as I described her.

"J. C——, a man of refined and scholarly tastes, a student of Oriental languages, failed in business soon after their marriage. She induced him to retire to the country, where they possessed, on a Western lake, a charming home. He was a man without other than mere intellectual tastes, slight, but healthy; refined, gentle, and of a temper generally gay. At times, but rarely, he was subject to depression, and was never happy away from his wife and only child. In youth he had been a sleep-walker. His father died early of palsy. The father was an only child."

"A neurotic family," I said, "and two generations of one child each. Some element of weakness. Go on."

"One year ago she received a check for twenty thousand dollars, the amount of a mortgage paid off. She indorsed it over to him to enable him to arrange, in a city near by, for the payment of the only business debt he had left, and, very happy at the promised release, he left her.

"On his arrival at M——, he wrote her that he had never been more glad, and that he was about to be rid of the one burden which had troubled a life otherwise entirely happy. From that day until a month back, he was never heard of. He drew the money from the bank, paid no one, was known to have taken an Eastern-bound train, and that was all.

"The woman's distress of mind was evident to me, but she had all of that self-control which belongs to the thoroughbred woman, and, despite her distress, was clear and exact in her statements. By and by it became only too plain that she was a deserted wife. The detectives, whom at last she employed, traced him to this city, and here lost the clue. He was gone. The case got into the papers, and was a nine-day wonder.

"Meanwhile, two months passed, and Mrs. C——, having paid his debts in full, came hither to live, with some vague hope of finding him; and now comes the second and more curious part of her story. It is almost as incredible as anything in fiction.

"After living here until July, and exhausting the powers of the police, she went one day to the post-office to ask for a letter which had been underpaid. At the

general-delivery window the clerk was running over a bundle of letters, and, as she waited, threw them one by one on the window-shelf. Suddenly the handwriting on a letter caught Mrs. C——'s eye. She said, 'Is not that a letter for me?' The man said, 'Which? What letter?'

"'Oh, the last but one you threw down.'

"'Your name is?'

"She mentioned it.

"He returned, 'There is no such name in this lot.'

"She turned away, went at once to the office of the postmaster, and, simply telling her story, said she had recognized her husband's handwriting in the address of a letter. The official declined to allow her to inspect the letters. But at last she so satisfied him as to herself and her object that he sent for the clerk, and allowed him to run over the letters in question while she looked on.

"Presently she said, 'There! He wrote that address.' It was Mrs. Louis Wilson, No. 422 Blank street. The official of course declined to do more; nor did she insist, being clear-headed enough to be satisfied with the clue. Then she went back to her detectives, and in a week or two knew all that there was to know. Here is the report.

"Six months ago a man took a small house—No. 422 Blank street. He was presumed to be married. The man was roughly dressed and careless in person; had some business occupation as a clerk in a dry-goods house; known there as a good worker and punctual, but slovenly as to dress, and unpopular by reason of

an abrupt temper and general lack of social qualities. Traced back to a small hotel where he had once lived. Was believed to have married one of the maids—a rough, good-natured, common woman older than he; was now on a week's vacation at the shore. Name, Louis Wilson. Home habits of life unknown. Might drink at times, as he occasionally frequented a tavern near by.

"After this Mrs. C—— easily contrived to see the man. She is sure it is her husband. Her own force and intelligence are shown by the fact that she did not speak to him, and it is certain that there is some mystery back of it all. Lastly, she comes to me."

"Well," said I.

"Oh, I could, of course, fasten on him; prove bigamy; punish him; free her; or pay off the woman in possession. By the way, he is certainly married; that I learned to-day. As against either course there is much to be urged, and to neither course does Mrs. C—— consent."

"And what does she want?"

"Nothing yet. She insists that the whole affair is incredible under any assumption of sanity on the part of C——. How does it look to you?"

"If all she says be true, the man is not insane."

"No. I have seen his employer; you know him, I fancy. I was able to learn from him all I wanted to hear without alarming the man C——. He is unsociable and even morose; ill-dressed, even uncleanly, so that he has been told that he must be neater. He is said to be clear-headed, punctual, and accurate."

"All that might be, and yet he might have left her under some delusion of which there had been no warning."

"Well, it seems unlikely, and, let me add, Mrs. C——'s people I find are known to me. You may rest assured as to her intelligent truthfulness, and even as to her accuracy. I wired Mr. R——, in M——, and now know all about her. What do you think? and is it a case for a doctor? I myself am secure only as to this not being an example of mere vulgar desertion."

"No; there we are at one."

"Mr. S——, his employer, has arranged to send C—— to me with a letter to-morrow at eleven; Mr. C—— to wait for an answer. Could you meet us?"

"Yes; I should like to. Let us adjourn further consideration of the matter until then."

The next day I was talking to Vincent when Mr. C—— came in. Vincent said to me, "Sit down, Doctor, please, until I answer this note." While he wrote I studied C——. He was dressed carelessly; cuffs and collar soiled; hair unkempt; nails uncared for. Nevertheless, his facial lines were refined, if not strong, and both hands and feet were of delicate make. He sat in quiet, apparently a stolid, indifferent man.

At last Vincent looked up as he inclosed his reply, and said: "I have asked Mr. S—— to name a man who can do accurately a large amount of copying from notes of testimony. It needs care to decipher two or three bad handwritings. Once in clear shape, I can have it type-written. He says you can do it."

"Yes, I can; but I am slow. I could take it home. I would be glad to do it."

As C—— spoke I observed that it was with slowness and as if unsure of his words.

Vincent went on, "Will you let me see your writing?"

"I will bring some to-morrow. I write slowly."

"You speak a little like a foreigner." And then carelessly, "Where were you born?"

C—— looked at him, hesitated a moment, and said, "I don't know."

"None of us do," returned Vincent in his gentlest manner. "But where were you brought up? Are you an American?"

"I do not know; I kind of don't know. I must have been sick; I don't remember rightly."

The language and the tones were unrefined. Evident embarrassment was in the speaker's face, and he moved uneasily.

"Try to think," said Vincent, kindly. "When one employs a man, it is desirable to know a little about him."

"Yes, sir; I see"; and he was silent.

"Where does your memory fail you?"

"About seven months ago."

"And before that all is a blank," said I, abruptly.

C—— turned to answer me, troubled as I could see, but with no sign of alarm or anger.

"Yes; I think that is it. I don't go back any more than if I was born seven months ago. I can't make it out; sometimes I am unhappy about it."

"Could you tell how you got here?"

"Yes; on the railroad from M——."

"Could you write and read when you came hither?"

"That is a strange question, sir. I could speak. I speak badly. I must have been sick. I speak better now. I could not write my name in the hotel book. The clerk said that was queer, but I told him my name. He wrote it. In a few weeks I tried to write; at first I wrote from right to left, but I learned soon. I must have had a fever."

As he spoke, he became less disturbed and more interested. Then pausing, he added, "Why do you ask me? It quite bothers me."

Ignoring his query, I went on. "You came hither from M——, you say. Did you ever know a Mr. J. C——? You quite resemble him."

"No; never heard of such a man."

"An Oriental scholar. Student of Sanskrit, and so on."

"What 's Sanskrit?" he replied. "Never heard of that either."

At this moment Vincent rose, with a glance at me, and saying, "Wait a moment, Mr. Wilson, I will get a few pages of the notes. You may copy them and let me see to-morrow how you get on. Then we can arrange as to terms."

So saying he passed us and went into the outer room; was gone a minute or two and returned, followed by Mrs. C——. Her dignity of carriage and extraordinary calmness overwhelmed me with amazement. She looked at C——, flushed, and, drawing back a chair, as women do when about to sit down, adjusted her skirts, and took a seat.

I instantly turned to watch C——. Not a sign betrayed memory of the woman.

"Mrs. C——," said Vincent, "my friend Doctor North." I bowed. "Mrs. C——'s difficulty I have already mentioned," continued Vincent. "She has as yet no news of her husband, and, by the way, Mr. Wilson here is a Western man, Mrs. C——. I ventured on the mere chance of a clue to ask him if he ever heard of Mr. C——. I think you said no."

"Never heard of any such man."

I saw a change go over the woman's face; it was almost too severe a trial. The muscles of her chin twitched. She was silent for a moment, and then said, with evident effort, "You look like Mr. C——"; and, rising, "you might be he. I am his wife."

The clerk smiled. "Well, I am Louis Wilson, and have a wife of my own."

I saw Vincent touch his lips with his finger as she turned toward him. At once her remarkable self-control asserted itself.

"Excuse me," she said; "I must go. Pray send me the title-deeds, Mr. Vincent. I really must go. Good morning," and went out.

"My clerk has the notes ready, Mr. Wilson," said Vincent; "you need not wait here—in the outer room, please." And then the lawyer and I were alone. "What now?" said he.

"It is a case of what is called double consciousness. This man abruptly lost all memory of his life and its events—that is, of people, of things, not of words; probably of all written signs. Most habits must have remained, but as to this we do not know. The intellect was not altered. He was able rapidly to reacquire a new store of guiding, useful remembrances, and to

learn to write. In a case I know of there was this same tendency to write to the left."

"He knew Hebrew; did it not come from that?"

"No," I said. "The other case was that of a half-educated country girl."

"When," returned Vincent, "he came to the H—— House here, he was like a rough, ignorant child, and was alarmed when addressed by a stranger. The chambermaid said he must have been ill. After a while she learned that he had money. He seemed able to count it, but for a long while could not understand what a bank was. The landlord, an honest German, took an interest in him, and finally induced him to deposit the money in a bank. His intellectual appreciation of things returned with great rapidity, and now you see what he is."

"Yes; it seems incredible. These cases are rarely seen in their abnormal state; that is the difficulty. Of this I am sure, the loss of memory of people, of animals, of places, is absolute; of language the loss is incomplete; of writing, entire. But the reacquired writing is identical as to the forms of the letters with what has been lost; you will be able to verify that with ease. Strangest of all is the change of character, of tastes, of manners. In one instance a sad, morbidly religious person became gay, vivacious, ignorant of religion, fond of jokes, and at last wrote queer doggerel verses, and for years oscillated from one state to the other; ignorant in state *A* of all that belonged to or had been learned in state *B*, and vice versa. It is a long story, and in print. I need not go on. The case ended by her remaining in the abnormal state.

She was gradually sobered as time went on, and as she acquired information through others as to her former condition. She finally became a pleasant, useful person, and lived for twenty-five years a happy, active life as a teacher."

"Then," remarked Vincent, "like this man, she was, at different periods, two distinct people, with quite opposite characteristics?"

"Yes."

"And irresponsible in one state for the crime or folly of the other?"

"Yes; like this man. Some people explain these strange facts by our having two hemispheres in the brain; but the power to write and to speak are the function only of the left side of the brain, and speech is lost but in part, and writing altogether, or not at all in other instances. I see no explanation. Whatever be the cause, it is such as may disappear and reappear in a minute."

"And this may happen here in this case?"

"Or may not; and there is nothing to be done."

"How horrible! And what do you advise?"

"If we tell him the truth, and prove it, there is the woman, his present wife, against us. Of course it will be hard to influence a man in his mental state—commonplace, satisfied—careless, at least. With the woman against us, we shall have a suit for bigamy, and to go into court with the defense of double consciousness would be useless."

"I see it all. If Mrs. C—— will have the sense to wait, time may settle it. I see no other resource."

When Mrs. C—— heard our opinion she was in-

clined to make a further effort, but at last, on being assured that C—— would be well watched, concluded to await the result in her old home.

To conclude this story, I may add that just four months later C—— appeared suddenly in her house in great perplexity and terribly disturbed. He had not a trace of remembrance of the past eleven months. He recalled the fact that he had gone to the bank in M——, and there his recollection failed. The new life, the novel employment, the locality he had lived in, the new wife, were for him as though they had never been. His rough dress surprised him. He was once more the quiet, well-bred, sensitive scholar.

He declared that one day he was walking in L street in this city, when, abruptly he was astounded and bewildered by the strangeness and unfamiliarity of the surroundings. He asked some one where he was. The second wife and home were as things dead to memory. He said to himself that he must have been ill. He went into a hotel, got a paper, saw that eleven months were a blank to him, and, asking his way to the station, went at once to his former dwelling-place.

Mrs. C—— adds that his ways, manners, tastes seem to be as they once were. At first he was somewhat dazed, but by degrees improved in health, and reassumed his studies. In answer to his uneasy questions as to his presumed illness and long loss of memory, she was able to say that vain efforts had been made to find him. At last he showed a strong disinclination to hear his former mysterious condition referred to, not a rare peculiarity in persons who have had his disorder. Now she proposes to go to the East

and travel in Oriental countries, a plan which in every way suits him.

Of the sum he took from home about two thousand dollars remained in the bank, and as to this we were embarrassed. He could not draw it out as J. C——, and he could not as Louis Wilson. It was decided to sacrifice it. To this day no one knows what became of the remainder of the money he had originally deposited. It had been drawn upon during his life here in large amounts, and Vincent had reason to think was lost in foolish stock speculations.

Mrs. C——, a just and generous woman, settled on the ex-wife a sum competent to support her. She was told that Wilson was disordered in mind and already married, and that she herself would enjoy her income so long as she took no steps to solve the mystery, or to discover her lost husband. She agreed to this, and the C——s will remain for years in the East.

"It is well done," said I. "I wonder how many of the incomprehensible disappearances depend upon a state of mind similar to C——'s. The more one considers it, the more bewildering does it seem. Are we all of us 'two single gentlemen rolled into one'? However, some day we will talk it over again, and ask me, too, about the cases of insanity where a man is conscious of two personalities in his own being, and converses for both."

"I shall not forget. Are there ever three?"

"No; I believe not."

XI.

SUNDAY was, both of choice and of necessity, the day when we were apt to make holiday together. The matchless weather of early November was also a temptation to be out of doors, and the wide hospitality of the park assured us of comparative solitude. And now it was an hour before set of sun, and about us the margin of a great wood, with a deep stillness in the cool autumn air, through which the leaves fell lazily, drifting earthward one by one. Far away below us many people lay on the slopes, quietly enjoying the rest and the sunlit river gay with boats.

On the forest verge, and in and out, St. Clair walked, his cap in his hand, and kicked the rustling leaves as he went, pleased like a child with the noise and with their colors.

It was rarely that Clayborne could be made to join our walking parties. He hated exercise, affirming it to be needless for health, illustrating his theory by his own example of perfect soundness. He, too, as he lay and watched the distant carriages and the quiet enjoyment of the groups below us, amused himself by stirring up the drifted leaves with his stick. At last he turned to Vincent. "I sometimes wish," said he,

"that men were like books, so that one could take them down from a shelf and read them at will."

"And then put them back when you have had enough," returned Vincent. "But then, my books are men, and they do vastly entertain me on the whole, and vary from day to day, which your tedious volumes do not."

"Oh, don't they?" cried Clayborne.

"By George!" said St. Clair. "This is the first time in my life I ever agreed with you. Vincent thinks books are just mere changeless things. My books, at least, do alter. I have suspected them of moving about on the shelves, and of course their dress, their associations, affect their power over men. Do not a man's clothes influence your estimate of him?"

"What do you mean?" cried Vincent, pretending not to understand.

"And," added St. Clair, "would you as lief read a paper-bound Leipsic 'Horace' as my Elzevir, with the thumb-marks of Sir Thomas Browne? Would it be the same to you?"

"Why not?" said Vincent. "The book is the book, that is all. Nonsense! The print should be clear, and the volume clean. I ask no more. Go on."

"Oh, we could fit all this truth to the books you call men," said St. Clair. "North has a little old Huguenot Bible. On its dainty binding are the signs of long and reverent use. It has the psalms for those who are about to go into battle, and for such as are condemned to the ax. It is just about the date of the massacre of St. Bartholomew. Is n't it, North?"

"Yes," I answered; "and when it came to me there was in it a rose faded gray."

"Oh," continued St. Clair, "and I know of a little volume of Shakspere which is faintly smirched here and there with the touch of finger-tips, now dark-red. It belonged to Keats, and as you all know how he died, you may know what were these red stains."

"And," said Clayborne, "in the great French library there is that rare book, the 'De Trinitatis Erroribus' of Servetus. Calvin burned him and his books, and it is thought, and I like to believe, that the slight marks of fire on this copy are evidence that it was rescued by some disciple, who came at nightfall to grieve where the smoldering ashes lay."

"Thanks," said St. Clair, simply. "That is a thing to make one think. Would you mind my using that little poem?"

"Poem! Who! I! What!" cried Clayborne.

"Yes. What a tragedy!" And the poet slowly moved aside into the verge of the woodland.

"I, too, have a book," I said, "which is to me strangely interesting. It is the copy of his 'De Generatione,' which William Harvey gave to one Francis Bernard, a London doctor. Men do not seem, in those days, to have inscribed their names in presentation copies. It is a modern fashion, I suspect. But this Bernard is clearly aware of the honor done him. He writes on a blank leaf, 'Donum Eruditissimi et Perspicacissimi Autoris, May 1, 1651.'"

"And why did you chance to say, Clayborne, that

you wished men were like books? Why, just *now*, I mean?" said Vincent.

"I had a woman's curiosity about these people on the hillside. I wanted to see their table of contents. They seemed to me, as we walked among them, to be chiefly Americans—mechanics I take it mostly, a class I never can get near to—in talk, I mean. Men of business, professional folks, the people of our own class, seem transparent enough."

Vincent smiled at me furtively. Clayborne was a bad judge of living character. His intelligence was, indeed, of a rare order of excellence. His lack of sympathy was complete, and sympathy is one of the keys to character.

"The trouble lies with you," I said. "No men are so approachable nor so often interesting as our own mechanics. All the lower classes in England are struck shy at once when a stranger of a class above them attempts to engage them in easy talk. It is not so with our people. Their sense of difference of social position is of other quality than that of the Englishman. The ups and downs of life are vast and common with us, and everywhere is growing a wholesome sense of the fact that the form of labor does not degrade—that at least it need not."

"The more the people think that, the less it will degrade," said St. Clair. "But there will always remain the influential effect of occupations."

"Let us clear our heads," said Clayborne, "as to what we mean by degradation."

"I mean," said Vincent, "or you mean, I fancy, that

there are occupations which cut men off from social relations with refined people, or shall we say with the class in which are found the best manners? No need to discuss the value of these."

"Well, then," said St. Clair, "accept that; and now if you were to name the occupations which socially disqualify to-day, you would find them fewer than they were even fifty years ago."

"True, quite true," said Clayborne. "Let us each make a personal list of the occupations which we think ought to disqualify for the best social life. Mine would amaze you. I have not the courage to state it. But go on, my little saint. You are doing it well. I never knew you half so definite before."

"Confound his impudence!" cried the poet, pleased nevertheless to be praised. "There was a time when to be a business man in some Southern cities was a social degradation. It is not so now. Compare the position of a teacher to what it once was. See how the poorer students of New England colleges may work in summer as waiters at hotels and go back to their studies socially uninjured. I must have told you before of the amazement of an Oxford Fellow when a waiter in the White Mountains, overhearing me speak at supper of my difficulty with a passage in an old Italian life of Galileo, offered to translate it."

"When a man's occupation, if it does not make him physically unpleasant, ceases to put social barriers in his way, you think that we shall have attained the right thing. Is that it?" said Vincent.

"Yes," I answered.

"But now it does make him socially impossible,

sometimes. How can the manners of a dry-goods retailing clerk ever be—"

"As yours," I said, laughing.

"Well, if you like, yes." And then, gaily, "But it would have been better manners to have left my manners out of the question."

"Oh, we need a standard," I said. "The clerk's manners do now disqualify. They need not continue to do so."

"I doubt it," said Vincent. "And yet in some New England towns the standard of manners and of cultivation is much nearer alike in all occupations than in our cities, and is not bad by any means. However, it is a long question to discuss here."

"I don't quite agree with you," said St. Clair. "I rather think that mere manners are essentially and invariably modified by what a man's work is. It ought not to be so, but it is. I hold a lease of my studio from an undertaker. Now and then he comes in to see me as to rent, or repairs, or what not. I perfectly loathe that man. His manners are subdued, like the dyer's hands, to what he deals in; he talks under his breath. He is always composing himself into attitudes of constrained sobriety. He pays you the same lugubrious attention he gives to a corpse. When he comes into a room it is always head first, and he seems to me to crawl around the half-opened door with cautious quietness. My workman calls him 'the measuring-worm.'"

"A cheerful person," said Vincent. "But St. Clair has proved his point."

"No; only illustrated his thesis," I returned.

"Your undertaker reminds me of a jest which ought to be preserved. St. Clair's landlord—the 'ghoul,' we used to call him—once consulted a friend of mine. The doctor said, 'You seem to have something on your mind, Mr. Maw.'

"'I have, sir. Whenever I feel ill,—and I am getting on in years,—I am saddened by the reflection that possibly my own funeral obsequies will be conducted with less orderly decorum than if I were here to superintend them.'"

"That is immense!" cried St. Clair. "I beg pardon; go on."

"The doctor replied, 'Well, Mr. Maw, why not have a rehearsal?'"

"That seems reasonable," said Clayborne, gravely. "But where on earth is the fun?"

This nearly crippled the party for further talk, but after some moments Vincent said, "Suppose we drop the undertaker, and—"

"Horrible word in its literalness," broke in St. Clair.

"Yes; bury him," I said. "Go on, Vincent."

"I was only about to take up the broken threads of our chat. There is the clerical manner, with its habit of exhortative inflections, very droll when astray in the commonplaces of every-day life. And the doctor manner—"

"Mine, for example?"

"Well, sometimes."

"Thanks; I shall remember that."

"The question," Vincent went on, "is whether any business must always of need so affect a man's manners and ways as to cut him off from the social life of

men so favored by fortune, inherited qualities, and education as to demand a certain standard. Do I put it fairly?"

"Yes," said Clayborne.

"Well," I said, "we must admit, I think, that all work has its influence on character, and on what makes for or against social charm. Are not these influences in some businesses too potent for evil to admit of their being overcome? It would be a vast gain to feel that merely because you do this or that you are not set aside as of a class to which certain avenues are closed. That alone injures, as St. Clair said, and is competent to affect both character and manners. I was told once in a great city of Europe that I would find it pleasant to be received in a certain class of society, but that it would be impossible while I continued to call myself doctor on my card. 'Of course,' said the friend who desired for me this privilege, 'my doctor does not dine with me.' And the man she named was a physician of European celebrity. He was not excluded because he was ill-bred, but because it was silently accepted as a fact that he could not be well-bred. I affirm that this alone is injurious in a measure, and leads to his being just what they despotically affirm him to be."

"Yes," said Clayborne; "however much a man may struggle against the social peculiarities of his class, in the end he will be apt to suffer defeat. Now as to the doctors."

"As to them," I urged, "let me say a word. Every occupation has its influence on character, be that what it may. My own profession is full of temptations to

yield to little meannesses. It is a constant trial of temper. It offers ample chance to win in retail ways by disparagement of others, and by flattery and appearance of interest where little is felt. The small man — what I may call the retail nature — gives way to these temptations; the nobler nature strengthens in resisting them. A doctor's life-work is the best education for the best characters. It is of the worst for the small of soul."

"Let us return to St. Clair's dictum," said Vincent. "I think it was that no general reverence for his mode of work, and no example, and no desire on his part, could ever make an undertaker socially endurable."

"Oh, sentiment comes in there," said I, "and that is inexorable. But to-day we have false lines for social boundaries. There is no sentiment in the way as to the mechanic. Make it only a question of manners, and leave that to him, but let us stand up for the American idea. It is the business of every man to see that his work in life does not put into his character anything which lessens his powers to please and be pleased in right ways."

"And that was what your screed about doctors meant," said Vincent. "You are an abominably sensitive breed. You abuse yourselves, but allow no one else to do so."

"Yes; I hardly know why, except that gilds are generally sensitive, and ours is a world-wide gild, and the only one. The world over we keep touch of one another, claim constantly of one another unrequited service, and abide by a creed of morals old when Christ was born."

"When you got off on to the doctors," said St. Clair, "I was about to ask you not to forget your promise to tell us about your friend the character doctor."

"That is a new trade," said Vincent.

"I will not forget it," I returned.

"Good!" said Clayborne. "But all this fuss about character is rather amusing. I don't think I ever took much pains with mine."

"Nor I," cried St. Clair.

"Nonsense!" I replied. "If not, then you had better begin."

"Did you ever hear the Russian account of the moral tontine?" said Clayborne. "I translated it for amusement when I was learning Russian. I can read it to you some time, if you like. It shows how a fellow may acquire too much character."

"I should like to hear that. Let 's have it next Sunday night at Vincent's. And now, suppose we walk home along the drive; I like to see the people."

"Oh, anywhere," grumbled Clayborne, "if you will leave alone my poor little char*acter*, as the servant-girls say; it is all I have. It satisfies me, and I have no respect for you people who have to send your characters to the wash every week."

"Mine needs it," said Vincent, "and—well, there really are folks who like paper collars."

"I hardly understand your very indistinct allusion," said Clayborne; "I have worn paper collars myself on a journey. I consider their inventor a benefactor to—to so much of the race as wears collars."

"And I," said St. Clair, "would like to introduce

the custom of erecting statues to what I call the negative benefactors of mankind, the people who invent tomato-cans, telegraph-poles, or paper collars. Oh, I could write the inscriptions too. This monument is erected by an injured public to preserve for eternal detestation the memory of Blank, Esq., who invented a new means of desecrating the beautiful in nature."

"We will all subscribe," I said, laughing.

"Oh, yes; you may laugh, but, think of this. To be alone with a friend in the forests of Maine. About you the moss-grown trunks of a windfall's ravage a century old. At last, you say, here no foot of man has been. Your friend points to a soiled paper collar at your feet. There are some crimes I could more easily condone than certain vulgarities, and the worst of it is that you get used to these horrors."

"Pshaw!" exclaimed Clayborne. "You really don't mean what you were saying. Would a bit of newspaper have offended your sensibilities?"

"Yes; it would. The American newspaper editor would have one of my tallest negative statues."

"That is rather too bad," exclaimed Clayborne, falling behind with the poet while Vincent and I went down the hill together.

"Clayborne's incapacity to see fun in any shape is exasperating," said I. "I consider it a real annoyance at times."

"Why?"

"Oh, I mean if we are alone together. It limits talk, and to have to keep too close watch on what you say is fatal to reasonable human intercourse. Imagine

yourself, when with a charming young woman, being asked every five minutes to explain your intentions. Clayborne is every whit as bad as that."

"Who is the man yonder?" said Vincent.

We were now near the drive, and about us were the serious but not discontented faces of well-clad people, chiefly Americans, and not a few Germans. The drive was in a remote portion of the park, and was scarcely watched by the guards, so that on it a few men were speeding their fast horses, amidst critical comments on the trotters by the groups on the grassy slope. Presently came at lawless speed a perfect pair of Morgans. Behind them, in a light wagon, sat a stout, red-faced man, smoking as if it were a duty to make his fairy-like equipage seem a steam-engine. He looked straight ahead at the road.

"Who?" I said in answer. "That is Mr. O——. That pair is worth—well, the value of your house. The man has this one pleasure in life. He runs horses, but never bets. He says that ain't business. He has accumulated a fabulous fortune from a patent he took for a bad debt. I happen to know him pretty well. He rises at six, breakfasts alone, reads swiftly two or more papers, is at work by eight o'clock, dines standing at a restaurant counter at noon, leaves work at four, drives until seven, eats supper, plays a little euchre twice a week at his club, or else reads a newspaper until ten, and goes to bed. Also, he is a bachelor and is clean shaven."

"Well, that is the outside—the natural history. What of the physiology?"

"He has a small house, lives plainly, has his one

extravagance,—fast horses,—and never gives away a dollar."

"The man has then neither vices nor virtues."

"Yes, Vincent," I returned; "he has the courage of his convictions, like other hardened thieves."

"And does not the sentence of a kindlier world on such as he touch him at times?"

"Never, I fear. I once went to put before him the needs of a great charity. He heard me patiently, and then said: 'I object to doing that which I am taxed for, and, besides, I am unable to give away money. I cannot do it. Other people can. I can't do it.'"

"And that was all?"

"Yes; almost all. He asked me to smoke, saying the cigars cost half a dollar apiece. I laughed, and said, 'How can you be willing to give me a half-dollar?'"

"'That 's true,' said he; 'but it is n't money. There 's something darned queer about money. I 'll leave your hospital something in my will, but I won't give you a cent.'"

"The being you describe seems to me incredible."

"Oh, here are the others." And we went down to the river, and walked homeward.

"And there is another horror," said St. Clair, pointing to the hideous collection of white marble tombstones on the further side. We could but agree.

"Yet," said Vincent, "even a modern graveyard can be made a fitting thing. Near a Western town a man gave a fine old wood as a cemetery, with the condition that small spaces might be cleared; that no gravestones should be other than gray; that none should rise

over three or four inches from the earth, and that the boundary-lines of ownerships should be marked only in the same way. Flowers and vines might be planted, but no tall monuments or iron fences were allowed. I am told that it was most solemn and beautiful."

"And," said Clayborne, "yonder mass of the dead must drain into the river from which men drink."

"Mother Earth is a great purifier," I remarked; "but the idea is certainly unpleasant. My friend W—— says it accounts for the conservatism of this great city."

"How?" said Clayborne.

"Oh, don't tell him," cried St. Clair, laughing. "Don't. It is a riddle."

"I hate riddles," said Clayborne.

"But there is a tremendous wisdom in this one," said Vincent. "It is a question of hygiene—how to separate purity from impurity."

Clayborne walked along in silence, while we chatted gaily. He was apt to keep an idea in his mind long after the talk had drifted away from it, so that half an hour later we were not surprised to hear him say: "I think I see it now. How curious! But it is an argument as well as a jest."

XII.

WHEN our Sunday evening talks chanced to be at Vincent's I was always well pleased. The addition of Mrs. Vincent seemed to bring out all the peculiar qualities of each of us, as a ripe peach before your best Burgundy enlarges your knowledge as to how one pleasant thing may mysteriously increase the power of another to give delight. If you were happy enough to be liked by this woman, you were made to feel when with her how gladsome a thing life may be. And this, too, in a sober way, for there was in her fashions a pretty tranquillity, and only rarely louder mirth. When she smiled, it was, as St. Clair quoted,

> As when an infant smiles,
> Not at but with you.

For her smiles were never employed for unspoken cynical comment, nor to hint the thing she dare not say.

I remember hearing her husband remark that she was more apt to laugh when alone, and her answer that her smile was for all, but that her laughter was private property.

This puzzled Clayborne, who insisted that Saadi had said, "The wise smile, and the fool laughs."

Mrs. Vincent retorted, "Then I am wise only when in company, and a fool when alone, which is a proof of wisdom."

However, St. Clair, liking to tease Clayborne, said that he knew Saadi well, and that the quotation was an invention. Upon which Mrs. Vincent insisted that for a man to quote himself was the same as quoting some one else, because men were never the same from year to year. Clayborne, confused by her nonsense, as usual retreated into himself to examine the proposition seriously, while she and St. Clair exchanged unspoken signals of childlike delight.

She was sure, however she teased him, to send the scholar away in good humor, and I confess that for me she had the effect of a glass or two of champagne, and kept me wondering at my own cleverness.

She had, like many nice women, a taste for the *mise en scène;* but this was instinctive, and probably unsuspected by herself. For the rest, she understood her husband, and was his best friend and lover. I do not think she liked women as well as men, but it pleases me that she never said so. Her housekeeping was mysteriously perfect. She had one accomplishment, a noble voice in speech and song; and one grief, the absence of children. I fancied myself her best friend, but I was never her physician, for she said, "I could not have my friend for my doctor"—a not very rare feeling among women.

When I came in she was seated alone, reading, and, the evening being warm, was clad in white, with deli-

cacies of lace here and there. She wore, as usual, no ornament, but behind her, on the table, so that the strength of her head was set against them, were several bowls of roses; and at her feet, on a low stool, stood a large, flat Moorish vessel, also full of flowers, on which she was gazing with distinct pleasure, her book lying open on her lap.

"What! Alone?" I said.

"Yes; we have had a discussion on folly and wisdom. Mr. St. Clair said a happy fool was better off than an unhappy wise man. Mr. Clayborne insisted with solemnity that a really wise man could not be as unhappy as a fool, other circumstances being equal. Then I quoted, 'There 's no comfort in wisdom, and no satisfaction in folly; for all that the former can do is, in some passage or other of matchless eloquence, to call the latter by her right name, after which she will dwell as contentedly your mistress as before.' I could not tell whence it came, and nothing would satisfy him but to take Fred down to the library to look for it, and the poet to help them. Sit down; they will not be long. You did not come to dinner, after all, and Miss L—— was so charming."

"Ah, my dear lady, how many of these charming women have you bidden me to see? I come, and talk, and look at them, and could classify them."

"You must not. This one was really all that I say."

"But you have said nothing. I wait."

"Well, she is not very pretty. She never says what you expect her to say, and seems always about to say or do something that might seem—well, a little pro-

nounced. Yet she never does really do or say anything that the best bred might not say or do. She has 'eyes that do not know their own solemnities'—eyes of heaven and a mouth of this earth."

"Fair food for saint or sinner," I said. "But really, I could not dine with you, and I should like to see this woman. When shall it be?"

"People who decline my dinners never, never make up their loss on this earth."

"I will never dine here again," I cried, laughing. "What are you—what were you reading?"

"St. Clair's new book; he brought it to me yesterday. Have you seen it?"

"Yes; but only the outside. What is it?"

"A dramatic poem called 'A Life.' A man sees a woman in her youth. They are in love, are separated by the inevitable, meet once again in middle life for a day, and once more when both are old. The interest lies in what they say of life and its intervening experiences. I am puzzled by the large knowledge he displays of a world he has never seen save in mere glimpses."

"Indeed, but does not that often strike you in the work of genius? A friend of mine told me Lewes once said to him that George Eliot never, to his or her knowledge, had the experience of physicians which enabled her to put on paper Lydgate, the only perfect characterization of a physician in fiction. Indeed, she had said as much to a man well known on the turf as regards the low turfmen in the same book."

"And can you explain it?"

"My friend said in reply, that although Mr. Lewes,

for example, might know little of serpent-worship, that were he able to recall all he had ever heard or read of it, he could write on it a book of great learning. He thought that we must presuppose in genius the capacity to reassemble by degrees a host of minutiæ for use at need.

"We all possess more or less of this. We set an idea before us, and by and by we are amazed to find how many ghosts of things apparently forgotten are summoned by this steady call upon associative memory. It is as when you drop into a solution of numberless salts a crystal of one of them. The formed solid begins at once to gather for its increase all the atoms of its kind."

She was silent a moment.

"Well?" I exclaimed.

"Oh, I was only thinking over your illustration to see if it helped me to understand any better. Perhaps it does. Illustrations in argument often serve only to puzzle me. You know P——?"

"Yes."

"His talk is a constant rosary of illustrations, or of illustrative comparisons, which merely bewilder. Before you have mastered one of them (and they are always clever), he is presenting you with another. But about genius in characterization, there must be also some power to do far more than memorize. There must be power to reject and modify assembled memories, so as at last to create that natural oneness of the being described which ends by making a living thing, not a mere photograph."

"Yes, there are plenty of bright books nowadays in which a man represents people he knows; but that is

bad art. Usually it begins and ends with one book, which excites false hopes of a brilliant career in fiction. Abidingly true power to characterize in fiction is automatic."

"Oh, here they come. And did you find the quotation?"

"No; we think you invented it," said Vincent.

"Not I, indeed."

"And are we to have the two manuscripts to-night? I vote for the Russian story first. Did you bring it, Mr. Clayborne? The title excited my curiosity—'The Moral Tontine.'"

"I brought it, but I have no power to translate so as really to render the spirit of the thing. I—well, really, I would rather you let me off."

"Oh, but you promised. What was it about?"

"Yes," said St. Clair; "you are in the toils. We insist on hearing."

"It is quite too absurd," said Clayborne.

"Then we shall see you in a new character," cried St. Clair.

"You shall have no tea," laughed Mrs. Vincent; "not a drop."

"That decides it," cried Clayborne. "Intelligent law proportions the punishment to the crime. I shall spoil the story, but no matter, I can't lose my cup, my three cups, of tea."

When we were quietly seated and ready, he said: "This is

"THE MORAL TONTINE.

"THE mysterious sides of Russian life are little known to the West. Nowhere else do certain forms

of mysticism secure so many serious converts. Some of these peculiar beliefs have been historically long-lived; others come and vanish. The singular story I am about to relate concerns one of these strange societies. It is taken, as I give it, from a rare book by Leresky, a Pole of great learning, who has investigated these curious associations, and whose book was suppressed, and is now difficult to obtain. He was enabled to see the proceedings of the circle or society which concerns my tale, and from them copied this illustration of the views held by the members.

"He abbreviated it in the telling, and it no doubt loses something by his abrupt way of relating what might with more art have been made interesting."

"One moment," said Vincent. "Did the Polish historian believe in the story?"

"Yes; he was himself a mystic. He gives evidence as to its occurrence, but makes no effort to explain it."

"And do you yourself credit it?"

"I!" said Clayborne. "Let me first read it. We can discuss it afterward."

"And I," cried Mrs. Vincent, "can wait no longer."

In the province of Vasilyskoosky were the headquarters of the secret society of the Kassilynza. This group of people traced their origin far back into the night of Russian barbaric time. They believed that lingual expression has interfered with the more natural and closer means of mental intercommunication, by which soul may come into contact with soul. For the purpose of recovering the lost powers of man, these mystics were accustomed to take vows of silence, and

to live together in pairs, abhorring speech, writing, and even signs. They believed also that for devoted natures it was possible to exchange for a time, or permanently, mental or moral qualities. This was brought about by an effort on the part of one man to eject from his mind a quality like courage, while the other man became passive and simply receptive. Thus a surplus of virtue or vice was gotten rid of, the object being the general good of man.

The center of this strange creed was the capital of the department, Notsob, and here they continued to meet, and to elude the police, who considered their views to be dangerous to the public good.

"Of course you will understand that all this I consider nonsense. It is much more in North's line than mine."

"Thank you," said I. "Go on."

"It may interest you, North, to know that the same process by which a man got rid of an excess of temper applied also to disease. The one man willed to lose his ill temper; another accepted it by mental effort. After some days, or at times abruptly, the former man's temper returned to him ameliorated by having dwelt in union with the nobler qualities of a man trained to self-restraint. And so also of disease; the same process being repeated over and over, as between the ill man and many well ones, his disorder was enfeebled by distribution until no one possessed enough of it to do harm."

Dr. Skoblowitsky, the second regent of the society, discovered that it was possible to influence disease at

a distance, so that a man in Warsaw might be receptive at a set hour for one in Irkutsk, and, also, what was stranger, that the difference in time made by the longitude of two places disappeared as a hindrance before the potency of the double exercise of two wills. But all of this has little to do with the incidents of my story, which Dr. Skoblowitsky describes in his chapter of proofs of the power of the double will.

It is related, in connection with some of the statements as to certain of the later discoveries made by members of the "Council of Minds," just before the police finally broke up the association in 1783, that at this time Dolinkovitch, the chief councilor, announced his belief that as the qualities of mind and morals involved distinctive entities, grouped for use in the republic known as man, these must be scattered by death. Some means, he conceived, might be discovered of utilizing and securing for the living man such of these faculties as, dislocated from the rest, and set at valueless freedom in spiritual ether, would otherwise cease for ages to be means of good.

It was found at last that by proper exertion of will power a man about to die could convey to one alive the dominant qualities which he himself possessed, but that those of which he had only a minor share could not thus be transferred. A prearranged acceptive willingness on the part of the recipient was alone needful for his share of the transaction.

Several curious illustrations are given of the workings of this method. Thus, the Russian poet Vasiloe Amgine, known as the Slavonic Poe, willed his imagination to his friend, the great German algebraist Von

Heidenbrugger, and in consequence of the fact that two sets of qualities came thus to exist in the same being with equality of force, the mathematician wrote a superb ode on the square root of x raised to the ninth power, and was in consequence put in the asylum at Cracow.

Other as sad failures, however, did not deter three men of the lower circle of the society from agreeing that as each died his best faculties were to become the property of the survivors, it being supposed that as they were all people of varied endowments the survivor of this intellectual tontine would end by possessing such force as would raise him to eminence.

Count Ortroff, the youngest of the three, was a man of great personal beauty, and endowed with a rather light mental organization; apparently, one of those butterfly natures which are generally acceptable, but incapable of profound affection. He had too easily captured the heart of his cousin, a woman of force and remarkable charms, but quite too well aware of the slightness of character of her lover. The engagement was broken off by a singular incident.

One morning in May Count Ortroff became suddenly aware of a change in himself. He awoke to a sense of vigor and activity of mind and body unknown before. Commonly gentle and confiding, he felt now a sense of desire to be aggressive, and scolded his valet because he had ventured to inquire of him whether he would ride or drive to the princess's country-seat.

All that day he felt himself a victim of contending forces. He was for the first time aware of being

deeply in love, and astonished the princess as much by the unwonted manifestations of passion as by abrupt outbreaks of vehement criticism of various people. As a rule he was gentle, refined, and most suave of speech, and to this his easy nature inclined him. Also, he had known himself to be so wanting in courage that he regarded the possible consequences of a quarrel with terror, and had declined to enter the army. His life was spent in concealing this painful defect of character.

After seeing the princess he remained at home for two days, reflecting on the sudden changes which had made him an irascible man and a passionate lover, and had also, as it seemed, lifted him into a higher intellectual sphere. In his amazement he consulted the chief councilor of the society, Ivanovitch Dolinkovitch, who said at once, "But was not yours the No. 27, Moral Tontine?"

"Yes."

"Then you should have prepared yourself to assimilate usefully the moral and mental properties of General Graboskovitch and Captain Viloff. You could by continuous effort of will have been ready to decline to entertain in your soul their bad qualities, and to welcome their better ones. You have been loosely and thoughtlessly acceptive. It is now too late. I was always fearful that your soul was of low specific gravity. The general died four days ago. I suppose that the more receptive nature of Captain Viloff secured the dead man's courage; without it his aggressiveness would have long since gotten him into trouble. You must be careful."

"Alas!" said Ortroff, and went away in despair.

A few days later he received a letter from Viloff. "I hear," wrote the captain, "that No. 2 of our tontine is gone. I am distressed to feel that I come in for no addition to my mental force, and that I have obtained only an excess of courage and an absurd indifference to danger. All gentlemen have courage enough; you will not need that, but if by ill luck you have inherited the general's obstinate pugnacity, I am sorry for you."

"And I," said Ortroff. "I must indeed be careful."

A few days later, at a ball, a gentleman offered some trifling slight to the princess. Ortroff was present. An irresistible impulse seized him. He followed the man from the hall, and struck him. Instantly an agony of fear came upon him; a duel was of course unavoidable. He sat up all night, and on the field next day displayed such signs of cowardice that his seconds declined to act. He apologized to his scornful foe, and a few hours after drove to the house of Dr. Dolinkovitch, to whom he related his trouble. The doctor was both sympathetic and interested. At last he said: "You have only to follow my advice. Go to the chief hotel and take rooms. To-morrow get up late, and go into the street in your shirt and drawers. The police will arrest you. Ask if it is midnight, and say you want them to find me, that I know your watch is out of order. They will send for me, as I am the police surgeon. You will act wildly, and I will send you to an insane asylum. In two months you will come out well, and your failure will be regarded as having been due to mental disorder."

Ortroff hesitated, but a note from the princess breaking off the engagement determined him, and the next day he followed out the doctor's advice to the letter, and was sent to an asylum. His friends and family gladly accepted the excuse, and took care to circulate it widely.

After two or three months he returned to his estates profoundly depressed. A week later he became aware of a new change. The acquisition of the vigorous intelligence of the general had made even more painful the sense of his own defect in courage, and the whole affair of the duel had troubled greatly the members of the circle, who had been much attached to him by reason of his sweetness of character and gentle manners. These, in a degree, had suffered by the inheritance of General Graboskovitch's soldierly roughness and shortness of temper. But fear of his own defects, together with his newly acquired acuteness of mind, had somewhat enabled him, as time went on, to control and modify them.

But now, again, there was a change. Captain Viloff, dangerously stimulated by an overplus of audacity, had been again and again wounded, and at last in a desperate night attack on the frontier was mortally hurt. The news already found Ortroff a new man. Indeed, before he heard that he was the surviving heir of the qualities of the other two members of the tontine, he had begun to feel the influence of the quality of courage which the two dead members possessed. The results greatly interested the circle. Again the count was seen in the neighboring town, and every one except the members of his secret society

was astonished to hear that he had called out his old antagonist, had explained to his seconds that his fear was only the coming on of his mental trouble, and had badly wounded his opponent. As a result every one called upon him, and with perfect calmness he himself went to visit the princess.

She received him coldly. Her notable intelligence was dominated by immense tenderness, by all the self-sacrificial qualities found in many women, and by a feminine adoration of masculine beauty. These had twice involved her in love-affairs with weaker persons of the male sex, and now her chief difficulty in renewing her promise to marry Ortroff arose from the fact that he seemed to possess the stronger will, and no longer appealed silently to her sympathies by his gentleness and instability. She replied to his passionate wooing that she could not marry a coward.

"But I am not. I will submit to any test," he assured her. "There is my duel. I was, of course, insane." At this she smiled incredulously.

"I do not know now whether I love you or not. Give me six months to reflect, and—and—bring me the order of St. George won on the battle-field."

Then she kissed him, and fled from the room.

Six weeks later, he was mortally wounded in the desperate struggle of Olnovina, and a friend brought the princess the cross which the emperor left on his breast as he lay dying in the hospital at Yasiloff.

"What a cruel ending!" cried Mrs. Vincent.

"It was a good exercise in Russian," said Clayborne, as he cast the manuscript on the table. "North

would have rendered it better. I hope it has amused you."

"Oh, amused! No," returned Mrs. Vincent; "it has interested me. I wonder if there can be any foundation for it."

"My wife has a coy interest in mysticism," laughed Vincent. "She enjoys a little flirtation with the vague."

"Then never could a flirtation with you have delighted her," said I.

"No, indeed," she cried; "he is atrociously definite. But what is there vague about all this strange story? It seems to the man who tells it to have happened."

"I think it in a measure explicable," I returned. "The doctrine of suggestion might—"

"There, don't explain it," she broke in. "I shall wait the demise of some of my friends with interest. Be it true or not, I understand the woman."

"I do not," said St. Clair. "How could a highly intelligent woman care for a man as feminine as he?"

"And you of all people! You, who worship personal beauty!" said Vincent.

"I am answered," cried the poet.

"No, not fully," said Mrs. Vincent. "And still, as for myself, although I understand the woman instinctively, I cannot explain."

"That is not understanding," said Clayborne, in his blunt way.

"Possibly not; but I decline to betray the secret counsels of my own sex. And here is your tea. One lump or two?"

The little chat had amused me, as, glancing at Mrs. Vincent's face, I had seen it flush faintly. She had been twice engaged before she married my friend, and, until then, her favored lovers had been men beneath her both in mind and character. She once said to me, "When you come at last to pay the debts contracted by that idiot Pity, the little god is apt to put up the shutters and declare that he is not at home for business." I should have liked to hear more from her on this subject, because the love-affairs of the best women are often inexplicable to men, and perhaps also to the women concerned. I ventured on one occasion to ask her a leading question on this serious matter. She said, smiling, "Have you not observed that clever women are apt to have more than one serious love-affair?"

I said that I had made that not difficult observation.

"Ah, well," she said, "I will make it clear to you. The answer to any one such drama is in the next."

"That," I said, "is delightfully lucid—to a woman."

As I sipped my tea I turned over a book of etchings, while our hostess went on talking the prettiest mere society nonsense to St. Clair and Clayborne. Her husband, much amused, sat by. Now and then she darted at him a swift glance of fun, or sought his eyes with a look of questioning eagerness. Whatever ideals had once been hers, she had found a trusted anchorage in the man she married. Indeed, I think the admiration she excited was one of the happinesses of Vincent's existence, and in every relation the per-

fect tact with which these two managed their common life was a pleasant thing to see. Like many kind and able women, dulness was for her no barrier to friendship; but to none was Vincent so charming as to her uninteresting friends, to none so generous and so courteous. She repaid the debt in kind to us all, and, as to St. Clair, was a sort of confessor to whom he confided his occasional troubles with a quiet, childlike certainty of help. I think that she did not much fancy Clayborne, but the art of absolute social masquerade belongs to the woman alone, and I doubt if even Vincent suspected her of caring less for the scholar than for her husband's other friends. Hearing the talk take a more serious turn, I drew my chair nearer.

"Yes," said Vincent; "a nation in the making is as to its individuals more interesting than one which is set in slowly changing historic ruts. As a rule, the English people—I mean the undistinguished—are to me of all the dullest. The chance American of any class, as one meets him in travel, is by far more amusing. I don't speak of his manners; he is apt enough to be common, just as the corresponding Englishman is to be vulgar; but class for class, our people interest me more."

"But how silent they are."

"Yes; yet open to talk if you ask for it. We had once the name with our cousins of being questioning creatures, but really I think that of late years we have exchanged rôles. Certainly the frank inquisitiveness of the English is past belief."

"If," said St. Clair, with his easy way of dislocating

the talk, "I had to attend to the education of a nation, I should declare a war once in every fifty years at least."

"I don't care myself to manufacture any more history," returned Vincent; "but certainly the generation which emerged from our great strife, North and South, was the better for it."

"And what faces it wrought!" said St. Clair. "I stood and saw go by me in Washington that army which followed Sherman to the sea—grave, thoughtful, strong-featured, with eyes looking homeward."

"And behind them the dead of countless homes," said Mrs. Vincent, "and that desolated, mourning South. Let us talk of other things; I cannot even now think of it without pain."

"It was but the historic consequences of folly and crime," said Clayborne.

She made no answer except in her gentlest tone to ask me to ring for the servant to remove the tea-tray. I knew that one of her brothers, long settled in the South, had lost his life in the Confederate cause, and I could have soundly cuffed Clayborne, who never remembered anything not in books. Now he rose to go, as we decided that it was too late to hear the "Memoir"; but then, retiring to a corner, as though he had forgotten his intention, sat down to read the nearest book.

St. Clair, who was greatly attached to Mrs. Vincent, noticing the slight look of pain which still lingered on her face, said, "You have been glancing at my little book."

"Yes. Read me something." And then—and this

was quite characteristic—"I should like the lines on Lincoln." He took up the book and read:

> Chained by stern duty to the rock of state,
> His spirit armed in rugged mail of mirth,
> Ever above yet ever near the earth,
> Still felt his heart the vulture-beaks that sate
> Base appetites, and foul with slander wait
> Till the sharp lightning brings the awful hour
> When wounds and suffering give them double power.
>
> Most was he like that Luther, gay and great,
> Solemn and mirthful, strong of head and limb.
> Tender and simple was he too; so near
> To all things human that he cast out fear,
> And ever simpler, like a little child,
> Lived in unconscious nearness unto him
> Who always for earth's little ones has smiled.

"Thank you," she said. "And one more before you go."

"This is not mine, but a friend's. He has a certain terror of publicity, but you will see at the close of the book I have put together a few of his verses. They have a fineness of quality I like. He does not write for the world, but as you write to a friend. He has pleasure in the clear coinage thought finds only when on paper."

"I think I know the man," she said. "And thank you again."

"Shall I read any more?" he said.

"Yes," she answered; "if you will be so good."

He took a book from the table, and read aloud the first half of "Saul." As he read I watched him and her. He seemed to know he was soothing her, that

this was what she needed. He read the poem as a boy explores a fresh stream or wood, with thoughtful joy, and as though he had just discovered it all, and was sharing it with you. As he turned the last leaf, she said quickly, "Do not read the second part."

"No danger of that," he said. "I think that at a certain age the poets should be retired on prose pensions."

"And who shall set the date?" said I.

"Not I," she replied; "and yet—and yet—"

"Well, what?"

"Merely that I feel now as to this poet as one feels about a friend who, as life goes on, ceases to be what he was, and becomes something else which is no longer grateful to you. You knew and loved him when only a few others understood him. And now, when he has won the adulation of the literary populace, you can only look on, and wonder with a little sadness at the character of the development which time has brought about."

"It is true," said St. Clair. "Once I went to a society, and a gentleman in the dry-goods business unrolled for us a mummy. He explained the processes of embalming and the spices used, and then the object of it and its relation to the solar system and to the manufacture of oleomargarine. He told us, too, how the Egyptians embalmed geese, and, reverting to his mummy, made plain to us that, having exposed the body thereof, it was found that it was not always possible to decide its sex or nature. I think I must have been half asleep, because, just as he assured us that this state of bewilderment was the main value of

the study of mummification, and that it was a wise invention of beneficent priests to train, through vexation, the intellect of the future, I woke up and knew that he was discussing 'Sordello' with occasional allusions to Mr. Sludge."

"I never before knew you half so cynical," said our hostess.

"Really, I have not put it too strongly. These societies for the infinitesimal dilution of criticism are exasperating. How the poet must laugh in his sleeve! My only comfort is that we did not invent the craze. There is a true story that an Englishwoman broke off her engagement with a sturdy guardsman because he did not know who Browning was. She took the man back again into favor when he was able to stand an examination on 'The Flight of the Duchess,' and 'The Red Cotton Night-cap Country.'"

"At least now, for a while, they will let my Shakspere alone. They have fresher prey."

"That is curious," said the poet. "Did not you see, Clayborne, that lately in repairing Shakspere's tomb there was found on the under side of the marble slab the lines,

> "Who stirs the ashes of my verse
> In his soul shall roost a curse?"

"What? what?" cried Clayborne. "Nonsense!" While the rest of us smiled, and the poet, who delighted to mystify the historian, burst into childlike laughter.

"In my young days," said I, "the business of dissecting dead poets had hardly begun. When but a boy I asked a mild old professor what Shakspere

meant by 'Marry, come up.' He reflected a little, and then said it meant merely advice to marry, and indicated the elevation of soul which would follow."

"But he was jesting at you."

"Not at all. He was quite vexed at the smile of an elder boy who stood by, and who cleared my head about it when we had left the class-room. I could tell you my critic's name, but I will not."

"Don't you want sometimes," said Mrs. Vincent, "to do to your books as the Russian censors do to newspapers, and blot ruthlessly some parts of them? If a human friend is silly, or wanting in some way, it is not thrust on you forever; but the folly of our friend-book we cannot escape. One must take our friend-book as all friends must be taken, with reasonable charity as to defect and limitation."

"A noble old man whom I know well," I said, "has had printed for himself in a book all the bits of verse he loves best; the little poems, the old ballads, he fancies; whatever taste, circumstance, or remembrance has made dear to him."

"That really is a good idea," said Mrs. Vincent. "Could n't I do that, Fred?"

"Readily," he said, with a smile. "The book might be a trifle large. And shall it be only verse?"

"Oh, there must be two; I cannot mix them. And a book or two there are I can't have in chips. By the way, is n't this a charming thought?" And so saying she gave me from the table a little copy of Marcus Aurelius. It was uncut, and tied to the long ribbon marker was a paper-cutter having on its handle a coin stamped with the features of the great emperor and

greater man. I knew in a moment who had given it by St. Clair's pleased look.

As I studied the grave face on the coin, Mrs. Vincent said: "I am waiting to cut the leaves. I did begin, but then fell to thinking of the emperor man guiding my fingers through his own immortal pages, and how some Roman boy, playing at pitch-penny with this coin, may have paused as the emperor passed, and turned to see if the medal were like him or not. I shall wait."

"Would he have been more great, or less," asked Vincent, "but for the woman, his wife, who had no sense of the moral stature of the man?"

"I do not surely know," she answered. "Women may immensely help men, but the strong of purpose even a bad woman does not mar. The best and the greatest have had bad luck with wives. The women who can worship the heroic, and yet use their own common sense usefully to criticize the hero—oh, they must be very rare indeed. And as to that book, I think I shall rest content with my present plan."

"And that?" I said.

"I keep near me on my table a few books, three or four—real books, I mean; books that are in the peerage of thought. They are as friends invited for a limited stay. Some day they go back to their home on the shelves, and others are invited to their places. But I meant to ask you how such a man could have had a son like Commodus."

"His father," I replied, "had virtue lifted to the height of genius, and genius is not heritable. By the by, a great Frenchman has said that is why genius is

not akin to madness, since madness is so apt to descend with the blood. And there, too, was the mother."

"And so," said Mrs. Vincent, rising, "the blame is to fall as usual on my sex. I shall leave you, I think, to your cigars. I have exhausted your wisdom. Good-night, and thank you again, Mr. St. Clair."

We rose, and she left us.

A few minutes later, Vincent said, "Have you guessed the man St. Clair's friend describes in that little poem? Do you know him?"

As he spoke I saw the sculptor look up with a gleam of amusement in his face. "Oh, it is a character; merely a character."

"I fancy I know the man," I returned. "I mean to respect his incognito. More might be said of him. He was, when first I saw him, a rather narrow person, but it was the narrowness not of parallel lines, but of a broadening angle sure to enlarge. In all ways his life has widened with the years—his tastes, his charity, his intellect, his power to please and be pleased, his range of sympathies. As a young man he was cynical, at least in talk, which is sometimes far enough away from the cynicism of action. We used to call him bitter, but some able men are in youth like persimmons, and ripen into sweetness under the frosts of circumstance."

"The men," said Vincent, "who reverse your comparison, and, facing all their lives a lessening angle, narrow to the point called death—we know them also."

Said St. Clair, "Let us hope that the crossing lines create for them too the widening angle of larger growth."

XIII.

HE account I had so long promised my friends of the character-doctor was delayed by a variety of matters. But one evening in the winter we met again at Vincent's. When I came in the room was ringing with the notes of his wife's voice. She had set for St. Clair a little love-song. Her voice had the rare charm of rendering the words with perfect distinctness, and the music was such as prettily to humor the sentiments of the verse. As she finished, he took it up and read it in his fervid way.

"Alas," he said, "we have lost the art of song. The gaiety and self-abandonment of its Elizabethan notes are dead for us. All the pretty silliness of it—its careless folly, and its gay music—rings with the life of that splendid day. Think of the lusty vigor of it, the noble madness of the lives. Imagine the struggle for national existence which made poets soldiers, and gave to life that uncertainty which makes man natural and outspoken. Here was a queen who, whatever her faults, had the art to get from noble men an ever nobler service; a woman who somehow influenced men toward greatness as surely as her 'sister of debate' made worse all who loved her."

"Oh," laughed Vincent, "we should have Clayborne give you his cold judgment of Elizabeth."

"And almost all he would say is true," cried St. Clair, "and yet but half the story. It wants a poet for entire estimate of the values of character. Your sweet, gentle, merely lovely woman makes on man no permanent impression. There must be force somewhere to evolve force. A very feminine woman with some flavor of the resoluteness of the masculine character has the trick to keep men steadily influenced, and there must be, too, the high-minded sympathy with heroism — in fact, some touch of that quality in the woman herself."

"I meant," I said, "to have added a word to what St. Clair said. England was musical in those days. Without that the song has no natural birth. Music died, and the song with it, as Puritanism grew to be a power. It was lucky for Germany, I think, that Luther loved music."

"The thought is interesting," remarked Clayborne.

"Yes," said Mrs. Vincent. "But to go back to our last subject. One of these days I mean to write women's husbands. A calm statement of our side might be valuable. I should take as my title-page motto the wise words of a friend of mine, 'Men differ, but all husbands are alike.'"

"That would begin and end your book," I said.

"Oh, the husband is generically alike, but specifically various. You may smile, but wait until you read my chapter on the management of husbands. However, I do not mean to spoil my literary venture by talking about it."

"Give me a few points," laughed St. Clair. "At any time I may become a victim. I cannot imagine it, but everything is possible."

"Might I protest?" cried Vincent.

"No, indeed," we said in one breath.

"Oh, it will be quite impersonal, my dear," she said.

"Well, and suppose we question you?" said I. "Is marriage, as we see it, a failure?"

"What a question! Is business? Are books? There are three marriages. One is a monarchy; a king or queen presides over life. One is a true federative republic; there is equality under large sense of law and of mutual rights. The third is anarchy. Time is the true priest. Many couples who seem unfitly mated learn as years go by to find the happiness they miss at first. There are people who ask too much of life. Sometimes they fail as to their own ideals and get what is better. I shall have a chapter on the friendship of marriage, and one on its disappointments."

"And one," said Vincent, "on the marriage of friendship."

"Might I say of that," she returned, "that if not a marriage of *convenance* (for it is more than that), it is, at least, a marriage of convenience?"

"Good!" cried I.

"And now we are going to hear something more; it is interesting," said St. Clair.

"No; I elect to pause here. I give you only one piece of advice."

"Well?"

"Don't marry a fool. If you would only let me choose for you."

"Agreed," said St. Clair, "if I may have a veto."

"By all means. But—"

At this moment Vincent's servant came in with a note for me. "Pardon me," I said. "Your revelations must keep, at least for me. I have to go to the hospital. I may be gone a half-hour, or much longer. Good-by, Mrs. Vincent."

"I am sorry. I had set my mind on a pleasant evening."

"What is your errand at St. Ann's?" said Vincent, as I rose to go.

"A consultation with the surgeons."

"Might I go with you?" said St. Clair.

I looked at him, astonished. "Well, yes," I returned, doubtfully. "But you may have to wait long if you remain until I can leave the wards. What on earth, my dear St. Clair, can you want now, at night? There is nothing to see."

"I will tell you as we go. If you say no, I shall be satisfied."

"Very well; come, and make haste," I said, as the others bade us good-night.

Presently, as we walked along, St. Clair said, "Your note told you that a man was probably dying. An operation might save him."

"Certainly."

"I want to see death. I want to see a man die. I never saw that strange thing. I have two reasons. One is related to my art, and is not an unworthy reason. But also, North, life is an immense happiness to me, and I feel some strange craving at times to see its misery, its darker side."

"Great heaven! It is all around you."

"Yes, no doubt; but I cannot grasp it. If I help a beggar, his satisfaction alone goes with me. I can be sad on paper, but nowhere else. It seems to me, as I reflect, unnatural, wrong. I think I realize grief and pain and trouble for others, but not as a thing possible for me. And this great awful fact of all life—death—I must see it."

I did not reply for a moment. Then I said, "Perhaps you are right. I am not sure. But you shall have your way."

"And death," he said, "you must have seen it until it is commonplace to you."

"I have seen it," I said, "countless deaths in battle, executions, death-beds—men, women, and children. It has never quite lost for me its awfulness. The materialism which makes it seem the mere stopping of a machine, into which I once reasoned myself, lessened and left me long ago. Once, by a death-bed in a hospital, I heard a surgeon say, as a man ceased to breathe, 'It has stopped; the engine has ceased to go.' His senior, an old man, replied, 'No; the engineer has left it.' I have ceased to reason about it. At every dead man's side I feel more and more that something, immaterial as the Being who willed the thing to live, has escaped me and my analysis. Life seems to me a thing as real, as positive, as death, and, trust me, St. Clair, as we live on and on, we get to have more and more trust in recognitions of truths indefensible by mere logic. To the man whom the latter despotically governs I have nothing to say in the way of blame."

"As I think of it," said St. Clair, "death, of which I

have seen nothing, only excites my boundless curiosity; and as I observe that generally I am correct in my predictions about myself, and am by nature fearless, I suspect that I would feel more curiosity than dread if I knew that I were to die to-night. One fear I certainly should have. I should shudder to think that my curiosity might not be gratified. And you? Do you think it will be?"

"I do not know. We are on ground which I rarely tread in talk. Some men, and I am one, shrink from these discussions as they grow older. One says more or less than one means, and a word said is like a bullet sped. As to some things I like to be silent. One gets into the power of words."

"What are you saying?" I added. He was speaking under his breath. He at once repeated aloud what he had been murmuring.

> Death seems so simple. Will it be
> Only a new complexity?
> Or shall the broken body free
> Broad wings of clearer life for me?

The mood and its expressed thoughts were unusual in the joyous man beside me, and without more words we moved on to the gate of St. Ann's. I left St. Clair below-stairs, and went up alone to the consultation. Drs. L—— and S—— awaited my coming. The case was one of old injury to the head. The consultation was called so late in the case that the question of the value of an operation was doubtful. The character of the two men came out strongly, as it is apt to do in these grim councils. The one, L——, was clear,

rapid, seized on the main points with almost instinctive capacity, formulated the facts and reached his conclusions with confident decisiveness. The other, S——, an older man, listened, read and reread the notes, lifted into prominence for himself the minor symptoms, and ceaselessly combated the other doctor's conclusions, deciding finally against an operation as useless.

My own voice settled the question for operation on the ground of harmlessness to a man insensible to pain, and without it sure to die. The operation was done swiftly and well by L——. As it went on it became clear that it had failed because of being a week or more too late. Said S——, who had the case in charge: "I always knew it would fail; I am sorry I troubled you at all. I don't believe much in brain surgery."

The instruments were cleaned and removed, the dressings arranged, the man carried to his ward bed, and a screen drawn around it. Then a fair-haired nurse sat down by his side, and the man was left to his fate.

As L—— and I descended the stairs alone, he said to me, "If you or I had had that case a month ago, it would have been operated upon, and possibly saved. Certainly his chances would have been enormously better. That man S—— is like an indecisive little child playing at puss-in-the-corner. He tries this corner, and runs for that, and all are occupied by some logical difficulty. Is it a moral or an intellectual defect?"

I said: "It has probably cost a life, and must have cost many. It is not any mere lack of reasoning

power. His essays are clear. You would think from them that he never had a doubt. There he has no responsibility. But let him face a case, and he begins to be troubled. He is a good man, and so tremendously anxious to be right, and to do right, that when human life and interests enter into his mental operations he becomes perplexed. At least that is the way I read him."

"How different from Y——, who does not care an atom for the patient, but is distracted by his fear of intellectual failure. Naturally he abhors the post-mortem criticism. I hate most of all the fellow who reaches an opinion somehow, is scared by his own decision, and begins to hedge."

I laughed,

"If ifs and ans
Were pots and pans,
How good a brain
Were any man's.

"Indecision is an awful fool. Good-night."

In the waiting-room I found St. Clair. "Are you still of the same mind?" said I. He nodded. "Then come." And we went up-stairs.

Stillness reigned in the dimly lighted ward, except for the soft tread of a night nurse, or the hoarse breathing of some sleeper lost to his own troubles, and regardless in slumber of the neighboring tragedy of death.

With St. Clair at my side I walked over to the bed, drew the screen aside, and went within its shelter. I could see that my friend was awed.

"He is worse," said the quiet little nurse in a low

tone. "You can talk," I said to St. Clair, "only not so as to disturb these others. This man will never hear voice of earthly man."

"And he is dying!" He spoke in a tone of surprise.

"Yes, and rapidly."

"And has no pain?

"No; none."

"And why don't you do something?"

"All has been done. We are face to face with the inevitable."

"He seems as if he was working," said St. Clair. "How flushed he is! How hard he breathes! And he sweats like one who toils, and has no other expression. It is like a watch with the mainspring broken, all a hurry of meaningless motion. And his hands, how they twitch! And this you call death. I told you that I had never seen it before, and yet it looks not unnatural. Have we some intuition of it? I must have seen it before."

The young nurse looked up at him with surprise.

"Ah!" he said, recoiling. The mockery of laughter which sometimes contorts the face of death, the *risus sardonicus*, passed over the features.

"Come," I said; "you have had enough of this."

"No; I shall stay. May I stay?"

"Certainly. A seat, nurse. I will speak to the head nurse." And I left him.

XIV.

SOME time passed before we met to hear my account of the character doctor, and meanwhile St. Clair had abruptly left town the day after our hospital experience.

Mrs. Vincent was talking to her husband when, just after dinner, I entered her drawing-room.

"It is an age since we met," she cried, cordially. "Sit down. Mr. Clayborne will be here shortly. And what have you done to my poor St. Clair? Read that," and she took from her work-basket a note dated the night I last saw him.

I cannot dine with you to-morrow. I have seen to-night what I shall be some day. It is horrible.

It was true, and he had gone away into the woods for a fortnight, like a wounded animal. Nor did he ever speak of it again, but came back as gay and joyous as usual. I returned the note to her.

"How could you?" she said. "I should have known how he would feel."

"I took him," I returned, "because he was reasonable in his desire to see a man die. But I suppose that, with all its awe, death is so constantly about us

dreams that we cannot estimate its influence upon others. When I left him—for he *would* stay—he was simply curious and contemplative."

"Do you remember," said Mrs. Vincent, "that description in Stendhal of the Italian who first sees death in a soldier on a great battle-field—his surprise, his curiosity, and at last his terror? It is in his 'La Chartreuse de Parme.'"

"No; I will look at it, but I have seen all this in war once or twice."

As she spoke, Clayborne came in. "Of what are you speaking?" he said.

"Of fear. Of the anguish of fear, unutterable, like the fear in dreams."

"Yes, the agony of terror," I returned. "One sees it in the insane at times, and in delirium tremens. There is nothing in normal life to compare with it."

"And were you ever afraid in war?"

"Abominably. We were supposed as surgeons to be non-combatants, but that means merely that one is to run risks without the chance to quiet himself by violent action. Frequently, we lost in dead and hurt a long list of surgeons."

"Indeed! I did not know that. And what do you think the best test, after all, of a man's courage?" said Vincent.

"To face a mob or a madman. I knew a man who once by ill luck was shut up with a crazy, athletic nurse. My friend locked the door, hearing the man's wife wailing outside. The nurse, while suffering from a delusion, had once hurt her, and now again imagining her to have been false to him, meant to kill her.

He asked for the key, and gave my friend five minutes to reflect, as he stood before him with a billet of wood he had seized from the hearth."

"And what did your friend do?"

"It was summer, and the windows were open. He threw the key into the street."

"And what then?"

"Oh, help came just as it was wanted, which is rare in this world. I have cut a long story short. My friend said afterward that he was glad of the experience; that he had little hope of escape, and now felt sure for the first time in his life that he was equal to any test of courage."

"I can understand that," said Vincent. "In these quiet days we are rarely tried as to courage. But, after all, is n't it somewhat a matter of training—of profession? I suppose, North, it never enters into your mind to fear contagious disease?"

"Never; except as to one disease: I have a fancy I shall die of yellow fever."

"Oh, but," said our hostess, "is n't it also true that physicians do not take disease as others do?"

"No; that is a popular notion, but quite untrue. I have thrice suffered from disease thus acquired: once from smallpox, twice from diphtheria. In Ireland, in the great typhus years, physicians died in frightful numbers, and so did the old doctors here in yellow-fever days. Unlike the soldier, we are always under fire."

"I should certainly run from smallpox. I might face a madman," said Mrs. Vincent. "As to war, I should run."

'And I from a log,' said Espriella. 'And your friends?'

'I do not know,' he returned. 'I cannot imagine anything which would make me really know fear. I think I am more afraid of what Anne would think of me than of any earthly object of dread. I can conceive as possible what North mentioned. We must have somewhere a nerve-organ or -organs which feel what we call fear. Now, to have these so diseased as to originate a sensation of useless, overwhelming terror, uncontrollable by will, must be a possible human torture the worst. And you have seen it.'

'Yes. A man says, I am afraid. You say, Of what?' He cannot tell you. 'It is nothing. I am afraid.'

'Two things I fear,' cried St. Clare, who had come in silently behind us—'pain and a ghost.'

'I am glad to see you,' cried Mrs. Vincent. 'Sit down. We are discussing fear, cowardice, courage.'

'Pain I fear most,' he said, 'yes surely know it. And a ghost. Well, I know that. I have seen one.'

'What? When? Where?' they cried.

'Ask North,' he replied.

'Yes, it is true; but first, before I come in with skeptical comments, let us hear your story. You are the only one here who has seen a ghost.'

'I was in my studio six months ago at dusk. I was thinking, as I stood, of how well my statue of Saul looked, the light being dim, as it would have been in his tent. I remembered then having seen the statues of the Louvre in a moonlight night, when, with the increase, I lingered among the hall of the great Venus.

Some of the fine lines of Sill's poem came back to me, and, turning, I moved toward the front room to get the book. At that moment I became aware of a black figure on my left side. It was literally shrouded from head to foot; even the face and the extremities were hidden. At first I was surprised, and then by degrees a deadly fear possessed me. I was motionless, and it did not stir. I turned to face it, but, as I did so, it moved so as to keep relatively to me the same position. The whole act, if I may call it that, lasted, I should say, a minute. Then an agitation seized the form, as if it were convulsed under its black cloak, and a faint glow, like phosphorescence, ran along the lines of the drapery, and it was gone."

When he had finished there was a moment of silence. Then Mrs. Vincent exclaimed, "Was that all?"

"A ghost in daytime," said Clayborne. "And the comment, North."

"As he lost it," said I, "he felt a violent pain over his left eye, and this was one of his usual attacks of neuralgic headaches. He has seen this phantom twice since. It was merely the substitution of a figure of a cloaked man for the lines of zigzag light which usually precede his headaches, and are not very rare. One man sees stars falling, one a catharine-wheel; but the appearance of distinct human or other forms in their place is a recent observation. I have known a woman to see her dead sister, until, after many returns of the phantom, she ceased to be impressed by it."

"How disappointing!" exclaimed Mrs. Vincent.

"And do you think these facts," said Vincent, "explain some ghost-tales?"

"Yes, some. I have seen cases where the headache did not follow the catharine-wheel, or the lines of light, or the specter, or was very trifling. And in some of these the ghost was duly honored as a true article until subsequent and violent neuralgias explained it as a rare symptom of a common disorder."

"Is the disease itself understood?" said Clayborne.

"No disease is understood. We trace back the threads a little way, and find a tangle none can unravel."

"Then the disease is as bad as a ghost—a real ghost," cried Mrs. Vincent.

"I disbelieve in ghosts, and do not try at spiritual explanations. The material for study of nature is with us always. We cannot experiment on ghosts. I know of at least but one hint in that direction."

"And that?" said Clayborne.

"Well, if the ghost be a real thing outside of us, you will on theory double it if with a finger you press one eye out of line, thus, and will then be able to say, like the mousquetaire in the 'Ingoldsby Legends,' '*Mon Dieu! V'la deux.*'"

"Which shows," said Mrs. Vincent, gaily, "how easily one may become the cause of duplicity in others. It is a lesson in morals."

"Imagine *Hamlet* squinting at his papa!" said St. Clair. "I tried it on my ghost, but it failed. North says he was only a monocularly projected phantom."

"That sounds reasonably explanatory," growled Clayborne, grimly.

"But what does your phrase really mean?" asked Mrs. Vincent of me.

"It means that the phantom is present only to one eye in these cases. To be able to double it, it must be seen by both eyes and be really external. If it be only in the brain, and due to brain disorder, we should not be able to squint it into doubleness."

"But," said Vincent, "it ought, in the latter case, to be present also when the eyes are shut. How is that?"

"I am not sure as to that, for I have been told by one person that her waking visions were seen with either eye, and with both, and that they could not be doubled by squinting, and were lost when the eyes were closed."

"And how do you explain that?"

"I do not yet. The patient was a remarkably intelligent woman, but hysterical, and the very suspicion of this puts one on guard, because these people delight to be considered peculiar, and their testimony must always be carefully studied, and tested by that of others."

"Tell us what she saw," said Mrs. Vincent.

"It is interesting, but I must cut it short. At eleven daily a gigantic black man entered the room with a huge bass viol, set it in a corner, and went out. Presently a second brought in an open coffin in which lay the patient herself. A little later a host of tiny men, all in red medieval dresses, swarmed out of the cracks of the viol, ran to the coffin, planted ladders against it, sat in hordes on its upper edges, and, lowering on the outside tiny buckets, brought them up full of tinted sand. This they threw into the coffin until it reached the face of the figure within. At this moment the patient began to breathe with difficulty,

and then of a sudden the pygmies emptied the coffin as quickly as they had filled it, and scuttled away into the viol, while the two blacks returned and took it away with the coffin."

"What an extraordinary story!" said St. Clair. "Can you explain it all?"

"Yes, in a measure; but it is hardly worth while. And as for ghosts, the honest old-fashioned ghosts, does any one believe in them?"

"I do," said our hostess.

"And I do not," returned Clayborne.

"But do you believe anything?" cried St. Clair.

"Yes," said Clayborne; "I believe there was a past, is a present, will be a future. And as to the rest—"

"Granted the past. As to the future," said St. Clair, "you cannot prove that it will be. But there is no present, because that implies rest of a moving world, swinging round with a moving solar system. It is a mere word."

"What! what! what!" cried Clayborne, suddenly contemplative.

"And, after all," said Mrs. Vincent, "we have had no really curdling ghost-story. Only nineteenth-century explanations."

"It is dangerous to tell a ghost-story nowadays," I returned. "A friend of mine once told one in print out of his wicked head, just for the fun of it. It was about a little dead child who rang up a doctor one night, and took him to see her dying mother. Since then he has been the prey of collectors of such marvels. Psychical societies write to him; anxious believers and disbelievers in the supernatural assail him

with letters. He has written some fifty to lay this ghost. How could he predict a day when he would be taken seriously?"

"I am very sleepy," said Mrs. Vincent, "and it is near to twelve. You have not had the smoke you are all hungering after."

"Clearly the character doctor must wait," said I.

"That may," she replied; "but not one of you can have a cigar until I hear a real ghost-story."

"Well," I said, "come close to me, all of you, and I will ransom the party."

"Oh, this is too delightful!" exclaimed Mrs. Vincent.

"It is serious, Clayborne," I said; "you might take notes."

"Preposterous!" he cried. "Might I not have even a cigarette at the window?"

"Not a whiff," said she; "I have heard that smoke acts on ghosts most injuriously."

"A ghost-smudge!" cried Vincent. "That is good."

"Suppose we get through with this thing," groaned the historian.

"It is brief," I returned.

"One morning, last autumn, I found on my breakfast-table a card, 'Alexander Gavin MacAllister, M. D., Edinburgh.' I know the man well. An able, sturdy Scot, given to usquebaugh. He had a large practice among the mechanic classes, and frequently consulted me. If a friend desired to annoy him, he had but to address him as Gavin. 'Gawin I was creesened, and that 's my name.' He would have fought on this, or for the honor of Scotland, or any man who thought

Burns a lesser poet than Shakspere. My servant said he had been waiting two hours. I said, 'Show him in.'

"Ah, MacAllister,' I said, 'sit down. I did not want you to wait. Talk away while I eat my breakfast; or, will you have some?'

"'Nae bite, sir,' and after I had sent the servant away, 'I 'm in vara deep waters. I hae killed a mon last night, and I hae done it of knowleedge.'

"I looked at him curiously. Eyes, hair, beard, skin, were all of various tints of red. All 'burned a burning flame together.' Also he was wet with the sweat of terror.

"'Let me hear,' I said. 'A little whisky?'

"'Nae drap, sir. I hae a deep fear that 's the witch seduced me. I 'm of opeenion that wheesky must hae petticoats, there 's such an abidin' leaven of meeschief in her soceeiety. I maun try to tell you, but I 'm nigher prayin' than talkin'. Ghosts and warlocks are nae quietin' company.'

"'Go on,' I said.

"'Dinna ye ken Mr. Gillespie, the banker?'

"'Yes; I see that it was reported that he died in San Francisco two days ago.'

"'It is so related. But I maun tell ye the hale case.'

"'Go on.'

"'Last night I hae reason to suspect that I maun hae been takin' bad wheesky. It was nae the honest barley; I blame the rye. It 's a warnin' to me for life, if the gude Lord spares me to reform. Ye see, yestreen, after the Thistle Society, I went to the St. Andrew's dinner. By ill fortune Mr. McGillivray sat opposite to me. Aiblins ye ken Mr. McGillivray. The

mon has nae havin's, which is to say manners. He made a very opprobrious remark concernin' the True Kirk. By reason of too mony veenous counselors, I had na the recht word to han'. And thinkin' he might na understond me correctly if I bided too long, I cast a bannock at his foul face. A gude bittie haggis he threw at me. I wad na hae dune that to a dog. The beast has nae senteement of nationality (it 's but a Lowlander he is, after a'). A watermelon he got for answer to his remark. It broke on his bald head, and the sinner went doun in gore, or the like of it, after the manner of the mon Sisera. And that terminated the conversation vara sateesfactorily.

"'The cheerman made a point of order that I, Alexander MacAllister, was drunk, and I was over-persuaded by five men to gae hame. When I got in, there on my slate was a message to go at once to veesit Mr. Gillespie, at No. 9 St. Peter's Place. Vara ill, it said.

"'Ye ken the mon's deid. I dinna ken why I went, but the next I remember I was at his door. There were lichts in the house, and a braw hussy of a maid let me in. Preesently I was in a bedroom, and there sat Mr. Gillespie, vara white, but dressed.

"'"Tak' a seat, Gawin," he said, and I sat doun.

"'Then he said, "Gawin, yer owin' me a year's reent."

"'"Oh, aye," I said.

"'"I am deid," said he, "and the executors will be hard. Now, Gawin, I want you to gie me a gude dose of poison."

"'"But you 're deid now," I said, and my hair stood up like flax stubble, that stiff with fear.

"'"I was a vara eccentric mon in the fleesh," he said, "and I'm nae less in the speerit. It has occurred to me, Gawin, an I were weel poisoned I might die as a ghaist, and get alive again. Dinna ye see the point, mon?"

"'I said, "That is aye gude logic," and ye ken he was a vara ingenious creature. "But war would be my neck for takin' the life of a mon?"

"'"I'm nae a mon, Gawin," he said; "I'm a ghaist, and it 's only a change of state I 'm cravin'. And there 's the reent. But ye maun mak' haste, or I will call in Doctor O'Beirne."

"'"Gude Lord!" I said, "ye canna mean that, Mr. Gillespie. There 's a hantle of deaths at yon mon's door."

"'"Then he 's the practitioner for me. I canna be waur. My time 's short; I was streakit yestreen, and to-morrow I shall be put awa' in the ground. And there 's the reent."

"'"Wull ye forgie me the arrears?" I said.

"'"I wull."

"'So I pulled out my little pocket-case, and mixed him enough strychnia to kill the ghaist of a witch's cat. He took it doun wi' a gulp.

"'"It 's rather constreengent," he said, and yon were his vara last words; and then he fell doun in a spawsm, and tied himself into bow-knots, and yelled —O Lord! sir. I fled like Tam O'Shanter, and here I am. I hae killed a mon.'

"'And then you went home?'

"'That may be, sir. When I cam' to full knowleedge of Alexander MacAllister I was seated on the

step of my door in the snaw. I went in, and — will ye creedit it? — the slate was clean. But that maun be the way wi' ghaist-writin'. It's nae abidin'.'

"'But the man is alive, Gawin. There is a telegram in the morning papers to say that the report of his death was a mistake. He had a faint spell or a trance — something of the kind. He will be at home next week. You must have been very drunk, Gawin.'

"'I dinna ken. And there 's the reent, and I saw it. Sir, a ghaist in spawsms. Nae, nae; it was nae a coeencidence. Dinna ye think, sir, considerin' the service, a gude bill for the reent and arrears would be but just?'

"'Certainly,' I said; 'he ought to pay.'

"'I hae muckle doubt as to the matter. If he forgies me the moneys, I 'll stond by the Kirk against the whole clan of the McGillivrays to the mortal end of my days. Might I hae a drop o' wheesky? No matter what kind. I 'll neever blaspheme against the rye again — there 's waur things.'"

"Delightful!" cried Mrs. Vincent. "You have earned your cigar," and we broke up amidst laughter in which even Clayborne joined.

XV.

WE met by agreement at Vincent's a week later. When I came in St. Clair was talking of my story.

"The possibilities of the ghost-tales are pretty well worked out," he said, "but Owen's was really fresh."

"The logical character of the old Scot in your story was past praise," said Clayborne.

"And what about the arrears?" remarked Vincent. "I should like to be employed to bring suit for them."

"Oh, I then and there made him write the bill against Mr. Gillespie's ghost. The old banker was delighted when I told him the story; he admitted the obligation, dead or alive, he said, and he was as good as his word."

"That ends it neatly," said Mrs. Vincent. "And now we must really have the character doctor."

I went on to read it, saying:

"The friend who gave me, at my desire, the notes of a part of a rather odd life is now abroad. I have woven what I knew of him into his own account of himself, and have tried to preserve the peculiar abruptness of his style."

THE CHARACTER DOCTOR.

AT the age of twenty-three I was an orphan. I was independent as to means, and by profession a doctor of medicine. I began to practise in L——, and, as I obtained only by slow degrees the patients I needed rather than wanted, I found increasing difficulties. If a case were painful, I suffered too. If it ended ill, I was tormented by self-reproaches. In a word, I was too sensitive to be of use. Weak or hysterical women liked me and my too ready show of sympathy. It was, in fact, real, and quite too real for my good or my comfort. Moreover, I hated to be told that I had so much sympathy. It is a quality to use with wisdom. I could not control it. It was valuable to some patients; it was useless to many, or even did harm. It made me anxious when my mind told me there was no need to be anxious. I was, in fact, too intensely troubled at times over a child or a young mother to be efficient. Decided or pain-giving treatment I shrank from using. I was inclined to gloomy prognostications, and this weakened my capacity to do good. And yet I was a conscientious man, and eager to do what was right. I have, however, observed that sanguine men, or men who deliberately and constantly predict relief or cure, do best. If failure comes, it explains itself or may be explained. I knew once a foxy old country doctor, who said to me, "Hide your indecisions; tell folks they will get well; tell their friends your doubts afterward." This may be one way of practising a profession; it was not mine.

A few years of practice wore me out, and yet I liked

it in a way, and best of all the infinite varieties of life and character laid open to one's view. At last I consulted Professor N——. "And you feel," he said, "more and more the troubles and pain of your patients? To feel too sharply is not rare, and not bad for the young. Sympathy should harden by repeated blows into the tempered steel of usefulness, which has values in proportion to what it has borne; otherwise it and you are useless. Get out of our profession." And I did. I accepted the chair of psychology at B—— University, and plunged with joy into mere study. I soon found a want. The study of man in books and through self-observation became wearisome. The study of myself in the mirror of myself made me morbid. I might have known it would. There may be some who can do this. Autopsychological study seemed to me profitless. Can a man see his own eyes move in a mirror? Also the single man is useless as a field of examination. You recall my lecture on "Genera and Species of Mind," and on "Varieties of the Same." After all, it appeared to me that what I wanted was to collect notes of characters, good, bad, and neutral, if there be such; to study motives, large and small, and to collate them with the history of men intellectually regarded, and to see, also, how the moral nature modifies the mental product, and the reverse. Out of all this I must get some good for others. This my nature made imperative. I obtained a long holiday, which it was supposed I would spend in Germany with Herr Valzenberg, whose study of the diameters of the nerve-cells in relation to criminal tendencies has attracted so much notice.

Nothing was further from my intention. I left B—— in February, 1863, and a week later had an office in quiet West street in the city of Baypoint. I put on my door "Sylvian West, Character Doctor." You will see that I changed my name. For this I had good reasons. I meant to be another man for the time. I believed that change of name would mentally assist me to this, and I had no desire to be called insane because I chose to strike out a novel method of study, with which I meant to combine immediate utility.

During my office-hours I sat for a while near my window to observe the effect of my business-sign. It was a rather pleasant study. The street was a quiet byway, but morning and evening many people of all classes passed through it. Most of them went by with a passing glance of amusement or vague curiosity; others paused in wonder, went on, looked back, and again went on. Some crossed the street to make sure they had rightly read my sign.

On the fourth day a young man crossed the street, rang the bell, and was shown into my office. I recognized the type at once. He was very sprucely dressed, was not over-clean as to his hands, and in his side-pocket I saw the top of a note-book. He sat down as I rose from my seat at the window.

"Dr. West?" he said.

"Yes. You are a reporter?"

"I am. How did you guess that?"

"It is simple. A note-book and pencil, soiled fingers, and, also—"

"Now that 's rather smart," he broke in. "And what else?"

"Nothing."

"Well, you 're right anyway. I 'm the social reporter for the 'Standard.'"

"A collector of garbage to manure with fools' vanities the devil's farms," I said. "You may not be bad yourself, but you are part of a bad system. I do not want you." On this his look of alert smartness suddenly faded.

He did not lose his temper, but replied in a tone of some thoughtfulness:

"A man must make a living."

"I wish," I said, "there was such a phrase as make a dying. That 's what you are making. Go your way; mine is an honest business."

"But the public are interested. The thing is unusual. I should like to ask you a few questions."

"As man to man let me ask you one. Are you never ashamed of yourself?"

He flushed a little. "Well, sometimes. I hate it."

"Then go and sin no more," I said, rising. "Good morning." At this he too rose, replaced the note-book he had drawn from his pocket, and, urging me no further, went out with a simple "Good morning." He must be young at the business, I reflected, and perhaps I may have done him good. I was undeceived two days later when I read in the "Standard":

GREAT SENSATION ON WEST STREET.

Crowds assembled about a curious sign:

SYLVIAN WEST,

CHARACTER DOCTOR.

Our reporter was courteously received by Dr. West, who said he was glad in the interest of the public to answer any questions. The interview was as follows:

"Yes; I am a character doctor. My business is to furnish characters to those who need them. Also I attend to sick characters. Sometimes whole families consult me as to the amendment and reconstruction of conflicting characters. Yes; I expect to have a character hospital, with wards for jealousy, anger, folly."

Then came details of my life. How I was born in Kamchatka, etc. I let the paper fall in dismay. It was the dull season, and there was much more of it. The man's trade-habit had been too much for him. I had more of them, but I gave up advising, and simply said that I would not answer. Then they interviewed my maid, and, at last, the cook at the back gate. It was almost as bad as the case of my friend who found a reporter under his table just before a dinner he was to give to a stranger of high position. I made a note upon the influence of business upon character. In a few days the plague abated.

Very soon my harvest began. At first I had an influx of Biddies, who each wanted a character. It seemed hard to make the public comprehend my purpose.

One afternoon about five I was told that some one wished to see me, and, leaving the up-stairs room I reserved for my books, went down to the office. On the lounge lay a man about twenty, of a death-like pallor. He sprang up as I came in, staggered, and fell back. I saw that he was ill, and called to the maid to bring wine, which he took eagerly. I said, "When did you last eat?"

"At seven to-day." Upon this I went out and

came back with food. "Eat," I said. By and by he rose, saying: "I thank you. I came to see you—for —but now I must tell you all. I left the penitentiary to-day. I got a year for stealing from my employer. A woman was the cause. Ah, three months would have done. When I got out I walked and walked; I thought I could walk forever, and at the corners the wind was in my face, sir. It was like heaven. Of a sudden I grew weak, and, seeing your sign, I came in. Now you know all. I fancy you 'll think I certainly do need a character."

"Yes. Where are you going?"

"To B——, in Indiana. I have my good-service money. I will go to L——, and then walk. I am an Englishman. I have no friends here. I was once in B—— a little while."

"Now for my advice. You cannot walk. Here, this will take you to B——. You will get on, I think. Pay me some day. Be tender to the wrong-doer in days to come, and marry early—a good woman, not a fool; mind that. Solomon's experience was large, and, as you may remember, he gave pretty much the same advice."

He looked at me, at the money, and began to cry.

"Don't," I said. "I never could stand that," and went out of the room. In a few minutes he was gone. I ought to add that he did greatly prosper, and is to-day an esteemed citizen with many happy children. About a week later a lad of seventeen called on me. He was well dressed and well bred. As he faced me I saw that he looked troubled, and that he hesitated.

"Well," I said.

"You are a character doctor?"

"Yes. What can I do for you?"

"I do not know. I don't know why I came here at all. Do I look like a bad fellow?" And he regarded me with eyes of honest calmness.

"No; you are not bad."

"Maybe I 'm a fool. I saw in the paper that you could tell if a man was bad, and why he was bad."

"Oh, hang the papers! What is it?"

"Do you think, sir, a fellow could steal and not know he did it?"

"Yes. Suppose you tell me your story."

Always people have been too ready to confess things to me; it was one of the many torments of my life as a doctor.

"Well, suppose a fellow had the key of a safe in charge, and something was missing. Could any one have taken it but him?"

I replied: "You are only half trusting me. Were I you I would be quite frank, or say nothing—at least to me."

There was a certain sweetness in the young man's face as he looked up at me and said, "Well, I know about doctors; they are like priests—but—"

"I am a physician."

"Must I tell you my name?"

"No; merely what happened."

"Well, father went out of town a month ago, and left with me the key of the safe in his library—in our own house, you know. I did not want it, but my elder brother is ill in bed, and there was no one else. The day father left he showed me where all the papers

were, in case he wired for any of them, and also showed me a necklace of emeralds my aunt—my au-nt,—oh, I came awfully near telling her name,—my aunt left in his care, because she 's in Europe. That safe kept me anxious. Yes, sir; it seems silly, but my mind was on it, and I am just nearly through college, and I never have had any cares. Of course it wore off by degrees, and then father came back. Indeed, sir, he was worse troubled than I, but I think I have been nearly crazy. I mean the necklace was gone. Why, I heard mother tell father I was very young and he must forgive me; but she sits in her room and rocks and rocks, and takes valerian. And now there is a detective, and he searches the house, and the servants look at me as if I were a thief, and that scoundrel he talked to me yesterday and guessed I 'd best own up."

"And is that all?"

"No, sir; I—they all try not to think I did it, and they believe I did. I think I must have done it. I was wondering when it was. If I only knew what I did with it! Every one thinks I took it. But where is it? How can I confess it? I am not sure."

At this he rose and moved about, looked out of the window, and suddenly came back, saying, "By George! there 's that detective."

"Sit down," I said. "You need not tell me you have been a good lad or worked at school."

"I 'm in the honor list, and I 'm captain of the eleven," he said, with sorrowful pride, "and to think—but I did it. It 's so."

"Hush!" I returned. "The man who slanders

himself is wicked or weak. You are only weak, and only that just now. You never did this act. I say so. If a dozen people say to a man daily, 'You are going to be ill,' that at last affects the most wholesome. If all you love tell you in words, looks, and ways that you have been a thief, at last a man doubts the evidence of his own memory and conscience, and loses his mental equilibrium, and joins the majority against himself. Then he is on the verge of becoming insane. Now, really, are all your people of one opinion?"

"No; my sister Helen she just laughs at the whole thing. I mean when she don't cry."

"Sister Helen has some sense, I should say. And now listen. Go and play cricket to-day. Settle down to your work; you have neglected it. Mind, these are prescriptions. It will come right. I know you for an honest gentleman; now hurry out of the door and detect your detective. Tell him you have told me all, and come back to-morrow. And your name, please?"

He hesitated, and said, "Frederick Winslow."

"And mind, make a good score at cricket, and leave it all to me."

"Thank you," he said. "I must try, sir. I—what is your charge?"

"Let that rest now. When you go the detective will visit me. It is our turn now."

A minute later, as I expected, the detective walked in. "Mr. Winslow," he said, "says he has told you all. I am Mr. Diggles. Here's my card." It bore a large eye in the center, and over it, "John Diggles, Confidential Detective Agency."

"Glad he owned up. Pretty smart boy, but they gets worried into lettin' out at last." All this rather volubly.

"Sit down," I said. "You believe that young fellow stole an emerald necklace?"

"Why, who else could have done it?"

"There is a reason for crime, usually?"

"Yes; I guess there 's always reason for wanting other folks' things. But he has told you he took it?"

"No; and if he had, in the state he is in now, I should not have believed him."

"Why? Not believe him! Why not?"

"Because you took it yourself."

At this he sprang to his feet and exclaimed, "I did not come here to be insulted."

I was about to explain that the probability of his being the thief was to me not less than of the necklace having been stolen by my young captain of the cricket eleven, but something in the sudden flush and rage of a man living always in familiar nearness to crime gave me reason to hesitate. Crime for these men loses its horror, and becomes a mere enemy to be technically dealt with. It troubles them as little as deceit does the soldier, who plays the game of war. Fraud is his weapon. I returned quickly: "What has been your life compared to this boy's? His has been honest, dutiful, and correct. And yours? What have you been?"

The man was singularly bewildered, and said nothing. I went on: "Who is most likely to be the thief, you or he? You had best go home and say the prayer of a wiser man — 'God be merciful to me, a fool.'"

"I want to know what that boy told you."

"That you will never know. Send me that lad's father."

"I won't do it."

"Take care how you act in this case."

"You called me a thief."

"I did."

"Well, then, you look out, that 's all." He was clearly foolish, as well as angry. "You think I stole that necklace. That 's the kind of character doctor you are!"

"I said you were a thief. And now it is a man's character, his honor, you are helping to steal, because you have no sense, and come to a point on any obvious fact."

"Oh, that 's all, is it?"

The Winslows were well-known people, and I readily found Mr. Winslow. He was a slow, precise, over-accurate man of sixty. No imagination; horizons limited; undergoing in advance physical, moral, and mental ossification. Of course, as a character doctor, I was to him a queer, extra-social animal. I soon found that I must tell him my whole story.

His astonishment was as large as his nature let it be; but as he knew my people, and conceded to the class to which we belonged larger privileges than he would admit for others, I was able to win his confidence.

I then explained to him my conviction as to his son's innocence.

"Oh, of course," he replied, "that is so. But, then, the facts,"—and he began elaborately to describe

them, ending with, "Of course it was n't he, but who was it?"

I told him that the boy was being goaded by hints, looks, doubts, half-beliefs, and the detective's folly into a form of mental disorder which would end in the avowal of what he had never done.

He was puzzled and alarmed, but, on careful examination, nothing new came out. On my casually asking for his sick son, he said that he was an invalid unable to walk; had neurasthenia, and now, refusing to see doctors, remained in bed. I was nearly at the end of my resources; I asked if I might see him, for, after our talk, I had so won my way that I was allowed to examine the safe, and to talk with the mother and daughter.

Mr. Winslow said: "Miss Winslow will take you up. He dislikes me to come in. He says my boots creak. He says some people's boots always creak."

Miss Helen went up with me. I was on her side, as she knew. She said to me: "He may refuse to see you. Why do you want to see him?"

"Because," I said, "we are in the tangle of a mystery, and he too is rather mysterious."

She laughed. "I see." Clearly she had imaginative possibilities, and I like that.

I said, "I will go in alone."

"I would," she returned, firmly.

The room was in half light. I said as I went in: "Mr. Winslow, I am a physician. Your father desires me to see you. My name is West. Let me open the windows."

"Oh, if I must, I must," he said, peevishly.

The flood of light showed me a thin, apathetic man of thirty. I sat down.

"Open your eyes." He obeyed. Then I went carefully into his case, and at the close he said:

"No, I can't walk or read; but I was better until this necklace business. Every one bothers about it. Aunt L—— says it is for my wife; and so I say, it is mine, and if I don't care, who else need care?"

As I rose to go he said: "My legs hurt me. Now you are here, just look at them."

I did so. There were on each leg bruises in the same place, below the knees. Hesitating, I went on to look at the feet. Then I said: "That will do. What fire do you burn? Oh, soft coal, I see. I will think it over, and see you again." Down-stairs I found Mr. Winslow.

"Well?" he exclaimed.

"Your son says he cannot walk. On his soles are marks of the black from the fire. On his legs are two bruises; one has a slight break of the skin. Either he is untruthful, or he walks in his sleep."

"He did as a boy."

The result was that I had a watch set on the invalid. After three nights he rose, lighted his candle, walked into his brother's room, and with curious care searched his clothes' pockets. At last he took a bundle of keys from one of them, and went quietly down-stairs to the safe. He was quite unconscious of being watched, and foolishly but deliberately tried key after key, small or large, and at last went back to his bed, dropping the keys on the way.

When I was told of all this, I was greatly puzzled,

and regretted that the key of the safe had not been left where he could get it. Saying that I was still better satisfied of my young friend's innocence, I went away, and before going home called at the steamer agency to engage passage for the coming autumn. As I entered I saw my detective go out of another door. After settling for my berth, I asked if Mr. Diggles was going to Europe. The clerk said, "Who?"

I replied, "The man who just went out."

"Name of Stimpson," said the clerk. "He sails next week.

The next day I sent for the man. He came early.

"Any news?" he said, abruptly.

"No; I merely wanted to ask you a question or two."

"All right. Go ahead." He exhibited no hostility.

"When did you search the safe?"

"The third day after Mr. Winslow came home."

"You did it thoroughly?"

"I did. Mr. Winslow he had n't unrolled all the bundles. He said it was no use, they was only deeds and such. I done it thorough."

"And are you not at the end of your resources?"

"No, sir. By this day month we shall have him. He is a boy, and he 'll try to sell or pawn it. I 've got an eye on him."

"But you sail next week." The man suddenly tilted back his chair, and in a certain loosening of his features I saw alarm and astonishment.

"I—yes—business abroad."

"Name of Stimpson?" I urged. As I spoke I rose.

"Look here," I said, "to-morrow you will go to the house and ask leave to search that safe. The necklace will be found the day after in a bundle of deeds."

"Are you crazy?"

"No; but you will be, and worse, if that necklace is not found. Now, I know, and you have one day, and no more. Remember, I know. It is this or ruin, and you are watched."

He looked at me a moment and then went out without a word, and did precisely what I had ordered him to do.

"And the necklace?" said Mrs. Vincent.

"Was found in a roll of deeds. My friend goes on to say that his theory was that the sleep-walker took the key, opened the safe, and—who can say why?—removed the necklace from its case, and put it inside a roll of old papers. On the detective's more thorough search at his first inspection, he found it, and easily contrived to pocket it."

"Meanwhile, we were set astray by the elder brother's somnambulism, which, I confess, misled me in part. The rest explains itself.

"The notes of the cases which follow are the last I shall read to you, although there are others as interesting. I find he has classified them under headings."

Case 31 consults me.

X——, æt. 30. Male, good habits, fugitive ambitions, intellect about No. 12 of my scale. Inexorably materialistic tendencies, with longings to see things more spiritually. Want of imagination; general lack of persistent energy; hence constant efforts aborted by

incapacity for continued labor, and lack of the bribes offered by imagination. Shifts responsibility on to his ancestral inheritances. A life of self-excuses, but says he is a failure. Advise the tonic of a desperate love-affair with a woman of sense. He says the medicine seems to be wisely ordered, but who is to be the apothecary? Prognosis bad.

"I think I shall call on that doctor," said St. Clair, laughing. "I know an apothecary — what next?"

Case 47.

Mrs. B——, æt. 33. Not a strong nature, but mildly disposed to do good, to attend to life's duties. No tastes, no strong traits; morally anemic. Spoilt as a child; indulged by a husband; petted by fortune. No intense maternal instincts, and relieved of the care of her children. Is bored to the limit of endurance, and is a little pleased with her capacity for ennui; regards it as a distinction. A life without motives, and, as a result, peevish discontentment. Her husband asks advice. He is immensely rich. I advise poverty, but he thinks that worse than ennui. There are no moral tonics for these people. You *shall* and you *must* are not in their drug-shops. That is the malaria of excessive wealth.

Case 131. "This will interest you," I said, "in the light of our recent talk. It is the last I shall trouble you with."

L—— at thirty-five marries a woman of fortune and attractions, an only child. By degrees she insists with tears and entreaties on absorbing his life in her own. He cannot leave her a day without difficulty; has by degrees given up his sports, his outdoor pursuits, and

at last is driven or decoyed into abandoning his business, which is not a necessity, as she is rich and lavishly generous. Her capacity for attachment is abnormally strong. Her case is one of jealousy carried to the extent of hating a rival in his pursuits or his tastes. She must be his life and adequate. This implies vast belief in herself. Of other women she is not jealous. Under this narrowing of existence he is failing in health of mind and body, and thinks himself a traitor to her. He is dissatisfied with a too merely emotional life. The woman sometimes absorbs the man; the man rarely captures the totality of the woman. Either is unwholesome. He consults me. I predict for him a sad failure unless he consents to declare his independence and is willing to discipline her into happiness. He will be unlikely to take my advice.

At this point Clayborne broke in with a yawn. "Really, my dear North," he said, "how much more of this is there?"

I laughed. "This is by no means all, but I shall not ask you to hear more. There is material for a dozen novels in these notes."

"That is an admirable reason for going no further. I never read novels. I tried to once, but I found that it made me desire to go beyond facts in my own work."

"To go beyond facts?" said St. Clair. "It seems to me that imagination controlled by reason ought to be indispensable to the true historian."

"Oh, your picturesque historian? We know him. Good night, Mrs. Vincent."

With this our evening ended. But as I went out Mrs. Vincent said: "Come in to-morrow; I want you to help a friend of mine. It is and it is not a medical question."

I said I would come, and, turning, noticed a queer smile on the features of Vincent.

XVI.

OU are good to come so early," said our hostess. "Sit down."

"Is she old or young?"

"I decline to say. You will be amused and puzzled."

This time Mrs. Vincent was mouse-colored, and clad in some stuff of silvery sheen where it caught the light. The flowers were vivid orchids, which looked like embroidered jokes or grotesque floral caricatures.

"I want first," she said, "to talk a little about your character doctor. Is not every true and clever physician more or less what he tries to be?"

"Yes."

"And people confess to you?"

"Ah, too much—too much!"

She was silent a moment, and then said: "I ought to hesitate about putting burdens on one already weighted heavily, but it so chances that a woman—indeed, women—I esteem need help which you know how to give. And—oh, I meant to explain, but here comes Mrs. Leigh."

As she spoke a large, handsome woman entered. She was known to me by name, and, in fact, was one of my kindred, but so far back as to give me no claim

of distinct relationship. Nor had we ever met, because she had been for many years in Europe.

After I had been presented, she and Mrs. Vincent fell into talk, and thus gave me a chance to observe that the newcomer was clearly a woman somewhat peculiar and positive, who had seen much of many societies, and was evidently of a not rare type of the woman of the world.

Presently Mrs. Vincent said: "I promised to talk to Dr. North of your difficulty, but perhaps, as he is here, and you too, it were better you said to him directly what you want."

"I would rather have done so through you, my dear. But, in fact, I am troubled. I distrust my own opinions, and I want to be just to my daughter."

"I am at your service," I said.

"You do not know my daughter Alice? Of course you could not."

"Suppose you state your difficulty."

"Alice is twenty-four— Do tell him, my dear. My opinion is worthless."

"Gladly," said Mrs. Vincent. "Alice is a woman of unusual force of character. As life has gone on she has acquired a strong belief that a woman of fortune and intellect (for she is more than merely intelligent) should have some distinct career. She has seen much of the gay world, and it does not satisfy her cravings. Like *Hamlet*, neither men nor women delight her. And now, coming home to live, she has grown depressed and unhappy. Occupations without definite aims dissatisfy her, and while she performs every duty to her home circle and to society, which she measurably

likes, she has a strong sense that these do not competently fill her life. No one knows better than I what this means. I had once this disease, and pretty badly —the hunger for imperative duties."

"And you," I said, much interested—"you were cured?"

"Yes; by marriage. It is what you call a heroic remedy. But not all women marry, and Alice has so far been hard, in fact impossible, to please. She has my sympathy because I once did have ambitions for a distinct career. They are lost now in the perfect gratification which I have in seeing the growth and increasing usefulness of my husband's life. It contents me fully, but it might not have done so. I pity profoundly the large-minded woman who, craving a like satisfaction, finds too late that the man in whose life she has merged her own is incapable of living up to her ideals."

"Well," said Mrs. Leigh, "you are no doubt correct, but Alice is Alice, and no one else, and Frederick Vincents are not common, and—"

"Go on, dear. Best to tell your own story."

"Oh, Alice says she can endure it no longer, and now she proposes to—really, Anne, it is awful. She wants to study medicine, and, oh, you do not know Alice. She is so determined. At last I promised to inquire about it. It is too distressing. And what can I do? I am like a baby when she talks to me. She is so obstinate, and then I get tired and say, 'Have it your own way,' and after that we both cry, and in two or three days it is all to be gone over again, just as I think I am done with it. Marry her! If I only

could. And now what do you advise?" said Mrs. Leigh, turning to me.

I was a little puzzled, and hesitated. At last I said: "Tell me first, Mrs. Vincent, what do you think of this matter? It is not to be settled by my own views. I do not know Miss Leigh, and you do."

"Yes; but I have tried to put you in possession of her peculiarities. Would you say, let her do as she desires, or would you be positive in refusal? She will yield, but she will hate it."

"Could I see her?" I said.

"Yes; she is dining out, but will be here very soon. She is to call for her mother."

"If, my dear Anne, she knew that we had been discussing her—she is capable, the dear child, of anything."

"Even of a love-affair," said Mrs. Vincent, merrily.

"Of anything else but that. Men are delightful to Alice until they become interested; then, as she says, she becomes disinterested."

"There is some truth in that," cried our hostess. "The moment a man is interested he ceases to be interesting to some women. If the position has in it nothing ridiculous to a woman, then she is either in danger or is a mere coquette."

"I do not profess to comprehend Alice," said Mrs. Leigh. "The boys I can manage, and Maude; but once when Alice was very little she said, 'Mama, was the Centurion a woman?' Of course I said, 'No; and why do you ask so silly a question?' 'Because he just said, "Do this," and "Go," and "Do that," and never gave any reasons; and that is the way you do.'

Of course I punished her, but that was useless. Once, after I had put her on bread and water for a day, she told me the Bible said that 'man shall not live by bread alone.' So I told her she had water too. When I came to let her out that evening, she said, 'I 'm so sorry, mama; I did not think about the water, and I forgot I was a girl; the Bible says a man.' Now we never argue."

I caught Mrs. Vincent's eye for a moment. It was intelligent and telegraphic. I began to feel curious about this reasoning child, and the woman evolved out of such a childhood.

"I can see," returned our hostess, "how difficult it must have been to manage a being like that, and one too, as I recall Alice, so affectionate and so sensitive."

"O my dear Anne, sensitive hardly expresses it. My children have been brought up on system, and a part of it has been absolute certainty of punishment. But if I punished Ned, and he needed it pretty often, Alice was in tears for a day, 'And, would I punish her?' And one day she was sure that would hurt Ned worse. Well, at last I took her at her word, and then Ned was in a rage, and declared he would kill himself if I ever struck her again."

"Struck!" said Mrs. Vincent. "But pardon me."

"Oh, they were mere children. I do not at all share your views about education; and then, dear, you have no experience — none."

"That is true," said Mrs. Vincent, quietly.

She was vastly tender about all little ones, as some childless women are. Pausing a moment, she added: "Our only excuse for talking so intimately of my dear

Alice is because I want Dr. North to understand the person for whom we seek his advice. Few people are as little likely to misunderstand us as he."

"Indeed, Anne, if he can see through Alice, he will be very clever."

"No one," I returned, "can easily apprehend character from mere description, and you seem to me to have, and to have had, a very complex nature to deal with."

"No; she is simple," said Mrs. Vincent, "and, like such people, very direct. Only,—and you will pardon me, Helen,—Mrs. Leigh and her daughter are people so different that it is not easy for them to agree in opinion. In all lesser matters Alice yields. In larger matters she is at times immovable, and," she added, laughing, "as my dear Mrs. Leigh is also, and always immovable—"

"Oh," cried the mama, interrupting her, "excuse me, dear Anne, but that is because I am systematic, and system can never be cruel, because people know what to expect. I heard Mr. Clayborne say that, and it struck me as very profound."

"Be sure," I replied, not a little amused, "that I shall regard all you say as a confidence. I must know Miss Leigh personally, and better than your talk can make me know her, before I advise you, and even then I may decline to advise, or my advice may be of little use, to her, at least."

"Too true," remarked Mrs. Leigh. "I know her well, and my advice is of very little use."

"I hear the carriage," said Mrs. Vincent. "This very original consultation had better end here. You were at Baden, Helen, were you not?"

"Yes."

"Did you meet the Falconbergs? Vincent is very much attached to them. You know he carried on a suit for the German embassy when Count Falconberg was *Chargé*. Ah, my dear Alice, how late you are! The dinner must have been very pleasant. Where is Edward? My old friend Dr. Owen North, Miss Leigh."

Instantly I knew, as I rose to meet her, that she understood that we had been talking of her. I read with ease the language of her face. One has these mysterious cognitions as to certain people, and even the steadying discipline of society had as yet failed to enable her to preserve that entire control of the features which makes its life an easy masquerade. The trace of annoyed surprise was gone as she said cordially: "I feel that I ought to know you. We crossed your path in Europe over and over years ago, and I used to hear mama regretting that we had not met."

"It was my loss," I returned.

"And was the dinner pleasant? Do tell us," said Mrs. Vincent.

"Yes and no. Too long. All our dinners here are too long. I exhausted one of my neighbors. He was rather ponderous. I tried him on a variety of subjects, but at last we hit, by good luck, on the stock-exchange. It must be a queer sight, and when we women are stock-brokers in the year 2000—ah, I should like to see what it will be then. I know all about bulls, and bears, and puts, and shorts, and margins, and—"

"Alice!" said Mrs. Leigh, severely.

"And the other man?" said I.

"Ah, he was really a nice boy of twenty. He con-

fided to me his ambitions. Do you not know, Dr. North, the sort of fresh shrewdness a young fellow like that has sometimes? It is delightful, and such a pleasant belief that he knows the world."

"That is like Alice. She is always losing her heart to some boy in his teens," said the mama.

"She ought to know Mr. St. Clair," cried Mrs. Vincent. "He is in his teens, and always will be. And I must be a witch. Indeed, I uttered no spells, but he always comes just at the moment one wants him, unless you expect him at dinner." And so, amidst her laughing remarks, she presented St. Clair to Miss Alice and her astonished mama.

St. Clair was utterly regardless of the conventional in many ways, and especially as to engagements. He might or might not dine with you if he had promised to do so, and these failures, due very often to facility of forgetfulness, were at times quite deliberate, and to appearance selfish, or at least self-full. He would receive a telegram and leave it unopened for a day, and I have seen the drawer of his desk filled with unopened letters.

Now he was in a long, dark-brown velvet jacket, and a spotless, thin white flannel shirt, with a low collar and a disheveled red necktie. As to his hands, they were always perfectly cared for, white, and delicate. The crown of brown, wilful curls over the merry eyes went well with his picturesque disorder of dress, but I could see that Mrs. Leigh set him down at once as a person not of her world. She was as civilly cool as her daughter was the reverse. He stood a moment by Miss Alice in her evening dress, a rosy athlete, blue-

eyed, gay, happy, and picturesque, with long Vandyke beard, soft mustache, and an indefinite, careless grace in all his ways. The woman was, as to dress and outside manner, simply and charmingly conventional. I have no art in describing faces. Hers was of a clear white, but the richly tinted lips showed that this was the natural hue of perfect health. As she stood, I saw that this paleness was not constant. Little isles of color came and went, and seemed to me to wander about cheek and neck, as if to visit one lovely feature after another. Yes, she was handsome; that was clear by the way St. Clair tranquilly regarded her. All beauty of form bewildered him into forgetfulness of surroundings.

As he was presented, St. Clair bowed to the matron, shook Mrs. Vincent by both hands, and then, as I said, turned a quiet gaze of delight on the young woman.

"I think we must have met before," he said.

"Indeed," she exclaimed.

"Yes; I am always sure of that about certain people."

"That is one of St. Clair's fads," I said. "But as to your table-companions. I know one of them. His sole pleasure is in stock-gambling."

"Ah," cried Mrs. Vincent, "I can understand that, and, indeed, all gambling propensities."

"Anne! my dear Anne!" said Mrs. Leigh.

"Yes; I should like to gamble if one did not have to lose, which I should hate, or to win, which would be worse."

"And to me it is incomprehensible," said Miss Alice. "I dislike chance."

"What! the dear god Chance?" said St. Clair. "I wish I could shuffle life every morning like a pack of cards."

She looked at him steadily. He was always in earnest. Then she remarked:

"You like all games of chance?"

"Yes; but I never win. I want to think I shall win, but I never want to win."

"And of course you do sometimes?"

"Yes, it is like making love. I think I want to win, but I do not, and I am dreadfully afraid if I come near to winning."

Miss Alice looked amused and puzzled.

"A rare fancy, I should say. And the money—if you do win? Does it not annoy, embarrass?"

"Oh, I give it away. I prefer to give it back to the man; but I tried that once, and found that it was looked upon as an insult. I had to explain, and it was not very easy."

"I should think not," said I. "I once gambled in stocks indirectly, and with a lucky result. A man lost half of his fortune in X. Y. stock. It fell from 40 to 7 in a month. He became depressed and threatened to kill himself. I did what I could, and assured him that the stock was good and would rise again. I was very young, Miss Leigh, and very sanguine. In a month he came back and said he was himself again, and much obliged for my advice."

"'What advice?' I said.

"'Oh,' he cried, 'you told me the stock was good and would rise, and as I knew you were a friend of the president of the road I determined to act upon your

confidence, and so I bought at 7 and 9 all the stock I could afford to carry.'

"Without a word I left him, and, returning with the morning paper, said, 'The stock is 37. Promise me to sell at once.' He said, 'Of course.' Then I made him pledge himself never again to meddle with stocks."

"And he kept his word?" said Mrs. Vincent.

"Yes; and made a dreadful amount of money."

"I like your making him promise not to gamble," said Miss Leigh, gravely. "What a droll story!"

Meanwhile Mrs. Vincent and the mother had been chatting apart, and now the latter rose. "Come, Alice," she said; and then, with the utmost cordiality, "And, Dr. North, let us see you soon, very soon, and often. We are of the same blood, you know. Good evening, Mr. St. Clair; I trust we shall have the pleasure of seeing you again."

St. Clair took no note of the difference in manner to him and to me; I do not think he saw it. He was again absorbed in the study of Alice.

"Oh, with great pleasure," he returned. "And Fred is in the study, Mrs. Vincent, you said? I will join him. Good night."

He went up-stairs, while I descended the staircase with Mrs. Vincent's friends. I put them into their carriage, and went back.

"Shall I need to apologize?" said Mrs. Vincent, when we were again seated.

"Indeed, no. What a remarkable girl! And the mother?"

"Oh, better than she seems. There is much sense back of her views as to system in education, and

although positive, cruelly tactless, capable, in a word, of incredible social blunders, she is yet a lady, and, moreover, a kindly, charitable woman. People like her. She is handsome still, as you see. But she is not the mama for Alice."

"I did not like her manner to St. Clair," I said.

"The only defense possible for him is to know him. Imagine the effect of that jacket on Mrs. Leigh! It said Bohemia at once."

"And if so, what must be to her social nerves the idea of Miss—Dr. Alice, in fact? Yes; I shrink from it myself," I continued, "and I am not sure that I am wise."

"At least," returned Mrs. Vincent, "it cannot be here a question of right or wrong. There is no wickedness in it. She abandons no duty. The brothers are old enough not to need her. The mother and she do not agree. I mean that they look at life from diverse points of view. Really, they both love and admire each other. Only on large occasions do they approach a quarrel, and Alice is as respectful then as she is determined."

"Not obstinate. Mrs. Leigh is that, I should say."

"Her worst annoyances are what Fred calls Alice's white mice. She has a curious collection of friends, the socially lame, halt, and blind, who adore her, and to pursue a duty is as much a temptation to Alice as a pleasant bit of wickedness is to some other women. You will like her. You are sure to like her."

"I do already."

"I knew you would. And do make St. Clair call. He never will unless you make him."

"I will try. I can at least leave his card."

"Yes; do. Next week, you know, we are all to take tea at his studio. I am to matronize the party. I want Alice to go, and her mother, but I will see to that. Only he *must* call, and then a few words to Mrs. Leigh will settle it. She does what I like, and likes what I do, and is, therefore, a model to all my friends."

"I have no need of the example, but I wish you had not asked me to meddle in this doctor business."

"Why?"

"I hardly know."

"And yet, that is unusual with you. I mean, not to be clear as to your reasons. I am sorry; I—"

"Please don't—I am always at your service—always. I will find a chance to talk to Miss Alice."

"Pray do; but be careful. I want her to like you. You know I insist on my friends liking one another. And now you must go. I am tired. Fred is upstairs."

"No; I must go home. Good night."

XVII.

I SAW none of these people for some days. The Leighs were not at home when I called, and my life went on its usual course of busy hours. Then I remembered Mrs. Vincent's request, and dropped in on St. Clair at his studio. Asking him casually if he had called on Mrs. Leigh, he said, "No," and to my surprise, "Would I leave his card?" I said, "Yes; with pleasure," and asked him at what hour was his afternoon tea.

"Jove!" he exclaimed, "I forgot it. I will see Mrs. Vincent. How do people remember things? I want to have that splendid young woman; and the mama, I suppose, is a sad necessity. How lucky that you came in."

"Best to see Mrs. Vincent soon."

"I will."

"Now, at once. Change your dress,"—he was in his blouse—"and I will drop you there. And make haste."

I did see him safely into Mrs. Vincent's house, knowing very well that it was as likely as not that he would have forgotten the whole matter had I not reminded him in time. Then I left my carriage and walked to

Mrs. Leigh's. As the door opened I met Miss Leigh in the hall, dressed for the street.

"Oh," she said, "you are caught and must come in. I am in no hurry to go out. I am sorry mama is not at home."

"I am at least fortunate," I said, as we turned back along the hall, "in finding you, and you will please to be a trifle blind while I drop St. Clair's cards on the table. Half a dozen friends are needed to perform for him his social duties. He might call on you daily for a week, and then not for six months."

"One must have to make large allowances for a friend like that," she said, as we entered the drawing-room. "But do you not think that that is a part of the capacity for friendship? I mean knowledge with charity."

"Assuredly. And with all his shortcomings St. Clair is a man to love. What he needs in life is some woman as tender as she is resolute."

"Alas for the woman!"

"No. I presuppose the one essential without which the double life is inconceivable—to me, at least. However, this must be left to fate. Mrs. Vincent will ask your mother and you to his studio next week. We are to see his statues, and to have tea."

"But mama will never go," she returned, hastily. "I beg pardon, she is engaged,—I mean there will be some engagement,—and I should like to go. Why do not all of you wear brown velvet coats?"

"And have curly hair, and write verses, and carve statues, and look like young Greek athletes! Ah, Miss Leigh, there are drawbacks—believe me, there

are drawbacks. Now a dress-coat would have made this afternoon tea seem so easy and so delightful to a matronly kinswoman of mine."

"You see too much," she cried, laughing. "Yes; so far as mama is concerned, that beautiful, worn velvet jacket was fatal. But perhaps Mrs. Vincent will make mama go. She has a way of smiling mama into or out of anything." Then she paused a little and, coloring, said: "Mama told me last night that she had talked with you and Mrs. Vincent about me. Mama never keeps a secret very long, unless you ask her to tell it, and I was sure that I should hear of it soon or late, for I knew at once the other night that I had been under discussion. Frankly speaking, I did not like it. Now, if you—if you were—were a girl, would you have liked it?"

I watched her with amusement and honest interest.

"Oh, the delightful possibility of being a girl, and of being discussed by you and Mrs. Vincent! I think I could stand it."

"Please do not laugh at me."

"I do not."

"But you do, and I am serious. I am not always to be taken lightly. And men are so apt to insist that a woman must be anything but serious."

"But every sermon has a text. About what are you serious?"

"You know. I—of course mama told me, and, to be plain, I would rather state my own case, even at the risk of your thinking me a very singular young woman."

"I might answer that to be unusual is not always to be unpleasant."

"That is nicely put and kindly. May I go on?"

"I wish you would. I have heard something of this trouble of yours."

"Oh, it is not my trouble. People—other people—take the rough material of one's views, plans, hopes, and manufacture trouble out of them. But pardon me. I interrupted you. Do you really want me to go on?"

"Pray do." She paused, looked up at me, and then down at her lap, and at last set wide eyes on me for a moment and continued:

"I hesitate because I do not know how much to say. Mrs. Vincent can tell you just what I am, the bad and the good. Oh, I see she has done it already."

"Yes."

"Well, I am twenty-four. I have more than enough means. Also, I have active brains. A certain discontentment with this life of bits and shreds troubles me. I am told that I should amuse myself as others do—with music. I can play, but I have no real talent or love for it. Sketch! I can caricature hatefully well; I loathe it. And at last mama suggests fancy work, and Aunt Selina says, 'The poor, my dear.' If I were free as to the last suggestion, I might find in it a true career, but no young unmarried woman could make of this a life—not mama's daughter, at least. What I need is connected work, something which offers an enlarging life. I do not mean for ambition, but as a definite means of development. You are going to say there is science, study."

"I was," I answered. "You are dreadfully apprehensive as to one's ideas."

"Oh, it was what others have suggested; but mere acquirement of barren knowledge seems to me a poor use to make of life."

"Yes; that is true. I am at one with you there."

"I have thought it all over. I want to study medicine, and practise it too. That is all. You can help me. Be on my side. I—I shall thank you so much. And you will be my friend in this, will you not?" These last sentences were spoken with some excitement, and with a look of earnest anxiety. I knew as she talked that this was not a woman to turn aside from her purposes with ease. And what could I say? I, too, hesitated. She went on again, and now with a pretty girl-like timidity which touched me.

"Perhaps I have said more than I should; I may have asked too much of you. Sometimes I seem to myself to be a strong, effective woman, needing no help, and competent to go my way. And then I find I have troubled mama, and that hurts me, and then I relent, and am like a weak child groping about for help. Are all women like that? I am stopped here, and turned aside there, and told to consult this one or that. It seems so hard to do what is right."

"No one knows that better than I do," I replied. "It is not enough to want to do right. And now, as regards your mother, I am not at all sure what to do or say. Like you, I want to do right, and do not find it easy."

I felt that I did not wish to wound this gentle girl, with her honest longings, and her despair as to the meagerness of mere upper-class life—its failures to

satisfy the large mind and larger heart. After an awkward pause I said, "I should like to help you, and I desire in so doing not to hurt you"; and, having so spoken, felt like a fool.

"But you must not mind that. It is not—not as if you had known me for years. Speak as you would to a stranger, a patient."

"You have made it difficult."

"I? How?"

"No matter. I will do as you say. But remember, I may be wrong, may have prejudices."

"Pray, go on."

"I think that every human being, man or woman, is entitled to any career he or she may please to desire. This is a mere human right."

"Oh, thank you."

"Wait a little. Whether the public will use the person or not, is the business of the public. Should you ask if personally I believe that women make as good doctors as men of like education, I say no. Should you ask me if I think it desirable that in the interests of society in general women should follow the same careers as men, I say no."

"And why?"

"That is a serious question, or rather several questions, some of them not easily to be answered. I would rather not discuss them."

"And is this all?"

"No; and you will smile at my sequel. I never saw a woman who did not lose something womanly in acquiring the education of the physician. I hardly put it delicately enough: a charm is lost."

"Oh, but that is of no moment."

"You cannot think that. You would lose the power to know you had lost something. That is the real evil. Others would know it. Men, at least."

"Do you think this really important?"

"Yes, I do."

"Oh, there is mama, and I have not half done."

"Perhaps it is as well, Miss Leigh. You should ask some one who is not a doctor. Every profession has its prejudices, and I am constantly in fear of mine. But, in fact, as to these, the best of us are like people with cross pet dogs; we may be puzzled to know what to do with them, but we do not knock them on the head."

"Oh, but how a nice frank statement like that comforts one. You will not forget that I have as yet said no word in reply?"

"No. I shall want to hear—I shall very much want to hear."

As I spoke, Mrs. Leigh entered, large, rosy, handsome, and smiling. She was a little blown from the exertion of mounting the stairs.

"Good morning, Dr. North. I am glad to see you —very glad."

"Let me take your cloak, mama," said Miss Alice, as I returned the mother's welcome and added that I was on the wing, and had more than used up my time. Mrs. Leigh was profusely sorry, but rang the bell, and I left them.

For some good or bad reason the servant was not in the hall, and as I went down I was aware that I had left my hat in the drawing-room. As I went up

again to reclaim it, I heard Mrs. Leigh's voice in quick, decisive, and rather high tones. I was seized at once with a violent attack of what I may call the cough social. The voice fell a little, and I went in, saying, "I was careless enough to leave my hat, and rash enough to come back after it."

"I am glad you have come back," said Mrs. Leigh. "Do give me five minutes; I have been talking to my daughter."

"I beg of you, mama—Dr. North has an engagement; please not to—"

"It is perfectly useless, Alice. Every one is talking about it. Mrs. Flint asked me if you were going to be a homeopath or a regular."

"Mama!"

"And old Mr. Ashton asked me if he might send for you when he had the gout, and that fool, his son, talked about 'sweet girl graduates.'"

I had to choose swiftly between retreat or a declaration in favor of the mother or the daughter, who stood white and still before us, her hands clasped together in front of her.

"Pardon me," I interposed. "I have really but a moment; and again a pardon, if I say that this is not the best way to meet this question. You have flattered me by asking me to share your counsels. I must have time to think about it. Miss Leigh has been most frank with me, and, my dear Mrs. Leigh, speaking for myself, were I Miss Leigh, nothing would harden me like the ridicule of such women as Mrs. Flint. She is smart—that is the word—and malicious, and so confident that she confuses people who

do not know her combination of ill humor and inexactness."

"I did not quite understand her," said Mrs. Leigh. "Do you think she could have meant to make fun of Alice, of us, of me?"

"Oh, I knew of course you would see through her. I hope when Miss Leigh attends that hoary sinner Ashton, she will give him some good old-fashioned dose. May I beg to be called in consultation?"

Miss Leigh smiled. Her hands unlocked. "Thank you," she said. "And do let this matter rest, mama."

"Oh, of course. I wish other people would; but I could not expect Dr. North to agree entirely with Mrs. Flint. She told me—"

"Mama!"

"I think Dr. North ought to know how she talks about him."

"Ah, I knew she would justify my character of her. You have made me happy for the day. Good-by. Good-by, Miss Leigh."

XVIII.

ST. CLAIR, a day later, was in what Vincent called the indefinite mood. When in this state he wandered, or rather drifted, whither the tide of accidental encounter took him. These mental states were apt to be followed by days of impassioned work with the pen or molding-tool. But when idle, he would drop in upon Vincent or Clayborne, meander about among books of law or history, complain with childlike disappointment if their owners could not go out with him, and at last slip away silently to feast his eyes on the colors of the piled-up fruit in the old market-sheds, or to walk for miles in the country, have what he termed a debauch of milk at a farm-house, and return home late at night.

About eleven in the morning he found himself (for it was literally that) in Clayborne's study. The historian looked around. "Take a pipe? Cigars in the case; cigarettes in the drawer; books on the table. I am busy."

The final remark was quite useless. "So am I," returned the poet. And this exasperated Clayborne into attention. He shut a huge folio with such vigor as to disturb the gathered dust of other lands, and said savagely:

"Busy! You don't know what it means."

"My dear fellow," returned St. Clair, "I am so happy to-day. Don't moralize. Be glad some fellow carries his Garden of Eden always with him. No; don't consider it affectation. You are a misery-mill; I am a flower-press. And, really, grumble seems to be your normal diet. Just now you think you are unhappy because some other man has said you make mistakes or come to wrong conclusions. It is a disguised joy. You are not truly unhappy. As for me, I do not care a cent what any man thinks of my statues or my verses. I simply live. That is joy. I am contented. Why not leave me to my happy follies? North says I have never achieved moral equilibrium, and that 's very fine, I dare say."

"I suppose," said Clayborne, after a moment's deliberation, "that moral equilibrium means serenity of mind."

"Now is n't that a little feeble?" retorted the poet.

"I rather think you are correct," said Clayborne, judicially. "I take it that serenity of mind is acquired, and is a state of content intellectually procured. Whereas you never acquire anything—I mean through experience."

"Quite true, and how nice that is! With you for knowledge, Vincent for a conscience, Mrs. Vincent for a confessor, and North—by George!" he cried, rising, "I wonder if he left a card for me. I asked him to. You ought to see that woman."

"You are like a book without an index," said the host. "What are you after now? What woman?"

"Oh, her figure and serenity! You should see her

when her face is at rest, and then when it smiles. And her eyes! Come and take a walk. It 's Miss Leigh I mean."

"Oh, that girl, Mrs. Vincent's latest enthusiasm. My dear boy, take care. I think I see you with Mrs. Leigh for a mother-in-law. You will need no other censor. It would be the thing of all others for you."

"So says Mrs. Vincent. I have several people who attend to my interests and doctor my morals. And you will not walk? Then I think I shall go and call on the Leighs. I should immensely like to model that hand."

"Best tell Mrs. Leigh so," said Clayborne, with a grim smile.

"I think I shall," returned St. Clair, simply. "And now you may demolish that critic; my malediction on him. Good-by."

After this he went away, and on the street bought a lot of roses and went along smelling of them, until of a sudden he was aware of Mrs. Vincent, who said as they met, "I suppose these flowers are for me."

"If you like. I was going to call on Miss Leigh."

"And Mrs. Leigh, I trust," said Mrs. Vincent, demurely.

"And Mrs. Leigh," echoed he, with resignation. "The stem of the rose." Then he added disconnectedly, "Clayborne knows them. I don't like that woman. I did not know it until I got away the other night."

"Oh, she is really nice. Don't nurse prejudices; when they get their growth they become difficulties

and embarrassments. And you see—well, I want you to like them. I mean the Leighs."

"I do. Is n't that girl superb? Come with me. If you don't, I will not go at all."

It thus happened that the two found Mrs. Leigh at home and alone.

"I met Mr. St. Clair on the way to call on you," said Mrs. Vincent. "And how are you all? And my dear Alice, is she visible?"

"No; she is out—as my Ned says, gone to visit some of her social cripples."

St. Clair looked up. "What are social cripples?"

"Oh—social cripples."

"I think I must be one," said St. Clair. "And perhaps Mrs. Vincent could persuade you to consider my claims. I have some people coming to afternoon tea at my studio."

"I fear that we are engaged," returned Mrs. Leigh. "Really—"

"But you do not know the date yet. How can you be engaged?"

"Oh, we shall be, I am sure."

"Not for *my* tea," said Mrs. Vincent. "This is mine, you know. I permit Mr. St. Clair to lend me his studio. We will talk it over later. I want your advice as to some of the arrangements. And now, about the children." After which there was talk between the two women, while St. Clair fell into a reverie, or with mental disapproval considered the furniture, until, at last, Mrs. Vincent rose, saying, "And now Mr. St. Clair and I must go. I saw your carriage at the door."

"Good-by," said St. Clair, to her amusement and annoyance. She was afraid to leave him, but nevertheless he stayed, and, as they said a word or two, surveyed the pictures. Then, being alone with Mrs. Leigh, who remained standing for a moment, he said:

"Don't you think pictures are very embarrassing things? They are so like acquaintances—so welcome at first, and then after a while one gets tired of them. Now here is this Corot with its ghosts of trees—"

"I never care for Corot," said the hostess; "and as for acquaintances, I—"

"Oh," he interrupted. "Pardon me, you were going to say that an acquaintance is a person with whom we are really not acquainted. Language is such a fraud. It ought all to be made over—and some other things, manners, for instance—"

"I can imagine the need for that sometimes," said Mrs. Leigh, severely. She felt as if some bad boy had exploded a pack of fire-crackers under her august petticoats.

"Oh, I feel it," he went on, laughing. "And if one could arrange an exchange of manners, it would illustrate the idea neatly. Now, if you and I could effect such an exchange."

"Good Heavens! I prefer to keep my own," said she, shocked out of conventional propriety, and amused despite herself.

"But why not? Then I know you would be sure to say, 'Of course I shall come to your tea.' And you will come, I know"; and he looked at her with a waiting, devoted expression which had been but too often

serviceable. Even Mrs. Leigh relented a little. "We shall see," she said.

"Oh, you will come," he said. "And to think of it, I once stood near you in Paris, and just as I asked to be presented you went away."

"And where was that, pray?"

"Oh, at the Comte St. Clair's, a far-away kinsman of mine. You know — or do not know — that we were Irish, and came to France long ago. My branch became Huguenots, more 's the pity."

"Indeed. Why a pity?"

"It lacks picturesqueness. Once it had flavor of romance. It has none now. I ought to have been a Catholic."

"And what are you now, may I ask?"

"I am nothing."

"I am sorry to hear it."

"Oh, it has its conveniences. I feel that constantly."

"I trust so, indeed."

As usual, he took little note of irrelevances, but went on: "I often like to fit people with the religion for which they were plainly meant. Really, as Clayborne says, or perhaps it was Vincent, the outward forms of religion are their manners. Some are stately, some common. But I have kept you. I must go."

Mrs. Leigh did not express regret, and he left her, with what reflections I could well imagine when St. Clair, in a mood of amused criticism, related this astonishing interview to Mrs. Vincent and me. Mrs. Vincent shook her fan at him. "She will never come to your tea," she said. "Never."

"Yes, she will. The Count was useful."

"No; you were never more mistaken. She is not the least of a snob. There should be a milder word."

"I should fancy," said I, "that she must be the very ideal of the unexpected. At least, if all I hear be true."

"No and yes," said Mrs. Vincent. "The great world has been of use to her. It is a valuable education to some natures. I often think what she might have been had she remained at home."

"I think I see," said I. "But certainly she is as full of social surprises as it is possible for a decently well-bred woman to be."

"She is like a rocking-chair," cried the poet.

"A what?" we exclaimed, laughing.

"A rocking-chair. My hostess put one in my bedroom last fall. I tried it once, and fell over on my head. If I put a foot on it to lace a boot, it hit me on the nose. It was always doing queer things. If I hung clothes on it, it fell over, and if the window was open, it rocked as if a ghost were making itself comfortable. Then it rocked on my toes, and mashed a sleeve-button, and—"

"Don't," cried Mrs. Vincent, quite helpless with mirth. "I won't have my friends abused." And we went away.

XIX.

ST. CLAIR'S tea was postponed, and as the weeks ran by, I often saw Miss Leigh at Mrs. Vincent's, and now and then at her own house. No more was said by me as to her plans. I less and less liked the subject, and when she approached it I merely put the matter aside, saying that it was too late to consider it this year because the college courses were half over, and would she let it rest for a time? But at last Mrs. Leigh, who was irrepressible, urged me to speak again to her daughter, and, seeing that it was as well to make an end of it, I put her off until I could talk once more with Mrs. Vincent.

I learned, of course, that Miss Leigh's plan for a fresh departure in life had become widely known through her mother's freedom of talk, and I did what I could to contradict the gossip. Yet, somehow, the thing haunted me. I seemed to see this handsome, high-minded girl with her exquisite neatness and delicacies of sentiment and manner amidst the scenes and work which belong to the life of the student of medicine. And was I not also a man essentially refined and sensitive? Had it hurt me? I knew it had not. But it is terribly true that a man may do and be that

which is for him inconsistent with his ideal of the highest type of womanhood. He may puzzle himself mad with the logic of the thing, and be beaten utterly by its poetry.

At last I found leisure to see Mrs. Vincent. "Do not forget St. Clair's tea," she said; "and come early. It will be amusing. I really made him do it. And the Leighs. Mrs. Leigh told me of your talk. Do you like her?"

"Yes and no. May I speak? She did seem to me hard and—"

"Oh, only in talk. If one has any real trouble, she is angelic. She likes you. But, then, she likes success, as I do. Yes, strange as it may seem to you, she would make an admirable mother-in-law."

"I should be pitiful of the man," said I.

"No. If he were morally weak she would rule him for his good, because in all worldly ways, and in business matters, no one is more shrewd; and if he were a man of eminence and force, she would give up once for all. She has no real fight in her, none at all."

I smiled.

"Oh, you may laugh."

"I only smiled."

"Yes, I know." And she set her large eyes on me watchfully. "Now, suppose by any chance our friend St. Clair were to lose his heart to my friend Miss Alice?"

"Impossible."

"Not at all. He comes here every day to talk about her. Now, with Alice's good sense and efficiency, and her mother's—"

"Pardon me, what?"

"Oh, her mother's desire to settle Alice, and then Alice's fortune. Now do you not see how very wise a thing it would be?"

"Are you jesting?" I said, seriously.

"I? Not at all. I lent Alice his last book, and she is delighted with it. Yesterday she quoted the whole of that poem of his about the storm. If he could only hear her recite it, I—I fancy he would—well—"

"May I be there to see!"

"And he is so handsome," she returned.

"The dear fellow would make any woman hopelessly wretched in a year. If I were you (if you are in earnest, which I doubt a little), I would meddle no more with this matter. I never thought you less reasonable."

"And I think I have annoyed you. Why, I cannot quite see. Am I forgiven?"

"What is there to forgive? Let us talk about the doctor matter. I told her what I thought."

"All?"

"No; not all. There are things one cannot discuss fully. But I said I did not believe it was best either for the sick or for society for women to be doctors; that, personally, women lose something of the natural charm of their sex in giving themselves either to this or to the other avocations until now in sole possession of man."

"And I am to think that you mean what you have last said?"

"Yes; most honestly."

"My own mind is hardly clear about it. At all

events, it would not trouble Alice Leigh. At least, I don't think it would."

"No; nor any other woman, nor any woman doctor. They fail to realize what they have lost. The man who is sensitive to womanly ways sees it. It is worse than nursing the sick, for even nursing makes some women hard. Were you with us when we discussed the influence of avocations upon men? Their effect upon women is yet to be written."

"I think Alice will study medicine. What men think of her will in no way disturb her. What the one man thinks, or will think, may be quite another thing. I believe I could stop her short by showing her some duty as imperative. And you laughed at me, too. But women have, over and over, given their lives, and lovingly too, to reclaim a sot. Why were it not a better task to keep straight a man of genius like St. Clair? If you fail to convince her—"

"Fail! I do not mean to try. Who cares whether one pretty woman more or less studies medicine? I talked to her and to her mother because you desired it, but, really, it is of no great moment."

Mrs. Vincent was playing with a paper-knife. Now she put it down with a certain resoluteness in the small action, and returned: "Of course; that is all true, and let us drop it. What is Alice to me or to you?"

There was a false ring in her phrase, and I said, "You do not mean that."

"Nor you what you said just now. I don't understand you, and we are both a trifle annoyed, and that is the reason why you must go away. And remember to be early at St. Clair's; we must make it a success."

"And the Leighs?"

"They will come; and now go and repent of your having been cross to Fred Vincent's wife."

I looked at her reproachfully.

"Oh, but you were, and you would have liked to be still more unpleasant. Good-by."

At this I did go, and, passing a florist's shop, repented in the form of a basket of lilies to my friend, and ordered a bushel of cut roses to be sent to St. Clair's on the Tuesday after.

XX.

IT was a brilliant snow-clad day near to the dusk of early twilight as I met Mrs. Vincent at the door of the studio, a little before the hour set for St. Clair's tea.

"The lilies were enough," she said; "but never, never be so bad to me again."

"Never. I promise." And we went in.

St. Clair had opened his stores of Eastern stuffs, and all the dingy chairs and lounges, the camp-stools and benches, in the molding-room were covered with brocades, priests' robes, and superb Moorish rugs and embroideries. Two of the statues, now finished in marble, were uncovered, but not that of the Roman lady striking with the *cestus*. Around this St. Clair had wrapped a vast sheet of worn purple silk heavy with gold fleurs-de-lis. I knew that he was proud of this work, and I wondered a little why it was hidden, but checked myself as I was about to speak. Whether Mrs. Vincent noticed it I did not know. Few things escaped her, but she too said nothing.

"Well," exclaimed St. Clair, "do you like it all? Is n't it pretty? And these flowers? Who sent them? And what shall we do with them?"

"That is easy," cried Mrs. Vincent, and began to

throw them on to the white marble bases of the statues, and upon the chairs, and around the tent of heavy crimson stuffs, within which St. Clair's athletic figure of Saul leaned in profound dejection against the tent-pole. On the inner walls of the tent, which filled all the end of the studio, were Eastern weapons and spears, swords and shields, of which he had a curious collection. When we had finished, St. Clair drew the folds of the tent together, and Clayborne and Vincent presently came in.

"And you really have come," said St. Clair.

"I?" said Clayborne. "Tea unlimited, and Mrs. Vincent? Of course I came."

"Why did you not uncover the Roman lady?" I said, in an aside to the sculptor.

"I do not know. I did not."

"It is not the nude that troubled you?"

"Oh, no! We come to be utterly indifferent as to that even in the living, and wonder at the feelings of others about it."

"Then why was it?"

"Would you uncover it? You may."

"No."

"And why not?"

"I do not know."

Then his guests began to drop in, men and women, society folks, for every one liked him, and no one took his social failings very seriously. There were half a dozen artists too, and by and by, to my amusement, Mrs. Leigh and her daughter. What Mrs. Vincent had said to the elder woman I never knew, but she was exceedingly affable to her host. She put up her

eye-glasses, and with a glance at St. Clair, who was faultlessly dressed, began to admire everything and to be largely gracious to everybody. As to St. Clair, he was at his best. His Huguenot blood had long since lost the gravity it brought out of persecution, and there were only the French grace and ease along with the individualized charm which made him always a delightful companion.

Vincent and I, of course, did our best, and a happy company wandered about and appropriated the roses, drank St. Clair's Russian tea and Turkish coffee out of tiny cups, and chattered around the statues, or recognized medallions of familiar faces.

Mrs. Leigh soon fell to my share. "Show me the things," she said. "I had no idea of Mr. St. Clair's force as a sculptor, and yet I remember De Visne in Paris spoke of him with great respect, oh, even with enthusiasm. And what lovely stuffs! Is n't he rich?"

I glanced at the woman. "No; he is as wasteful as a boy. He could easily make money. He does not care to."

"What a pity. He needs some strong, sensible woman."

It appeared to me that I had heard this before.

"He is not made for Benedict, the married man." Then I repented. "It might depend upon the woman. He is a dear old fellow, and amiable past belief."

"I have great faith in the capacity of women to manage men." This, too, did not sound home-made, and as I soon learned, Mrs. Leigh liked to repeat phrases which pleased her. "And now," she said, "a chair, and a cup of tea, and some time pray talk again

to Alice about that fad of hers. An old doctor has so much influence; not that you are so very old either, but, you see, as your cousin I can take liberties. Thanks. Where does the man get his tea? I must ask him."

Presently I got away, and found Miss Leigh talking with Clayborne. She was saying, "I have just finished your book on the 'Influence of the Moor on European Civilization.' We were in Spain two years ago, and now I wish I had read it earlier."

"And you liked it?" inquired Clayborne.

"Liked it? I liked it very much. I envied you the power to do it, the pleasure of the search, the joy there must be in such a review of historic or heroic lives. You must have learned Arabic and Spanish."

"Yes; that was easy enough. But I ought to tell you that my friend North says my defect is that I am not a worshiper of heroes."

"No; I saw that sometimes you were cold, when I wanted you to be warm. And Dr. North—I should scarcely take him for a worshiper of heroes. You might improve under criticism," she added, smiling.

"I will remember next time," he said with rare graciousness.

At this moment a woman asked him some absurd question about the statue beside us. I took advantage of it to call Miss Leigh's attention to a piece of embroidery, and began to wander with her to and fro.

"Tell me something," she said, "about the statues. These Greeks. What a poem the group is!"

"Yes. A Western city has ordered it for a memorial of the dead it lost in the war."

She looked at the group in silence, and said presently, "Did you know my elder brother, the one who fell at Antietam?"

"Yes; I knew him well. I may say he was of earth's best."

She made no answer. Her eyes were full; her face flushed. I said nothing, but moved quietly away to a corner as if to show her some rugs from Fez, and talked volubly until, looking up, she said, "Thank you. And now the statues. What is the one covered up?"

"It is a Roman lady. St. Clair does not uncover it."

"Why?"

"He is not pleased with it."

"But I might be. I shall ask him. Here he comes."

"No; do not. It is disagreeable."

"But I want to see it," she continued.

"You will not, must not. Pardon me."

"Must not?" And she looked at me steadily a moment. Then she turned to St. Clair. I was annoyed. I did not want her to see the sensual, cruel abandonment of the woman to the brute man's pose.

"What is your covered statue?" she said.

"A woman aping a man. A woman gladiator."

"And Dr. North does not like women to imitate men. If I want to see it, will you not show it?"

"And why not?" cried St. Clair, gaily.

"I am satisfied," she said. "I do not want to see it," and then to me, aside, "Was I very wicked?"

"No; I did not think you would persist. Be satisfied with your victory."

"I am. Be generous, and never remind me of my weakness."

"It was strength, not weakness."

"I am half sorry already. Would you have thought worse of me if I had persisted?"

"Yes."

"You are very frank."

"And you do not like that? If you had been my—my sister, I should have been annoyed with St. Clair and much more imperative."

"You have no sister?"

"No; I am alone in the world. Come, I shall reward you. Ask St. Clair to open the tent."

"And your lordship permits that?"

"Please don't, Miss Leigh."

She regarded me with a briefly attentive glance, but said no more until we were beside the sculptor.

"I should like to see your tent," she said.

"You can ask me nothing I shall not be glad to do," he returned. So saying, he cast back the tent-folds, as the crowd of laughing girls fell away a little.

"It is 'Saul in his Tent,' in his madness," I said.

"But, good gracious!" exclaimed Miss Primrose, "it 's a Jew!"

"And was he not a Jew?" said Miss Leigh.

"Oh, but in art! A Jew, you know. Why, the painters don't dare to make Christ a Jew."

"But they should," said Alice Leigh. "A Prince of the House of Judah. And this face is typical. And a king too. One misses 'the ruby courageous of heart.' If some one would only read us 'Saul.'"

We went on talking, not missing St. Clair.

"Hush!" said Miss Primrose, "what is that? Oh. how too delicious a surprise!" For now we heard the

sound of strange music, and St. Clair came from behind the tent in sandals and a white burnoose. Whether it was prearranged or not I do not know, as he always declined to tell. But here was the boy David, with a small, curious harp, his face all aglow under the curling brown hair. The crowd fell back surprised, and St. Clair dropped on one knee, and began to recite, or rather to chant, "Saul," with now and then a strange accompaniment from the instrument. The effect of the eager and strong young face matched well the intensity of dramatic power that he threw into the lines of that wonderful poem. As he ended, there was silence, and then he cried out merrily to Miss Leigh: "Was n't it absurd? I was miles in the desert already," and the applause was loud and long. As he spoke, I watched Miss Leigh. She regarded him with an intense interest, her face flushing. A few minutes after it was over he came back to us in his own garb.

"How good it was that you liked it," he said to Miss Leigh.

"And did I? How do you know?"

"I felt it. I saw. If you had not, I could not have done it. You could always make me do things well."

"Indeed. You do me honor. You have made me know that old friend better. But I see mama is signaling. I must go. We dine out, and never shall I venture on an afternoon tea again. It would spoil a perfect memory. Good-by."

I stood an instant as if studying the "Saul." What annoyed me? Every one went away laughing and joyous. I heard Mrs. Leigh praising it all to St. Clair. And then I went too.

XXI.

I SAW the Leighs now and then, and heard from St. Clair that he was making a bas-relief of Miss Alice. This he told me at the Vincents', where were the Leighs and Miss Primrose, whom I took in to dinner, and who was, as Vincent confided to me, the final young person selected for me by Mrs. Vincent.

"Is n't she charming?" said my hostess in a quiet aside. Her dinner was prospering, and she now found time to turn to me. "I knew you would like her."

"Like!" I said. "She is adorable. The prettiest girl I know, and so intelligent, and so—well, so full of tact." I saw in Mrs. Vincent eyes signs of distressed failure.

"Fred has been talking. I never have a fair chance, and you are getting old, too."

"Will she be like 'the rath primrose,' etc., think you? Oh, well, I will try again, but just now De Witt is coaching her about pigeon-shooting."

"Look at St. Clair and my dear Alice. Was there ever a more charming couple? Between us, now—do not you think—really—"

"I?" I ejaculated. "Do you sincerely want to marry her to that dear fellow? And you who care for both, and know him."

"You are possessed, I think, about our poet. He wants just such a person to make him as staid as—well, as you, and I really cannot see why you are called upon to interfere."

"Dear Mrs. Vincent, did I say I would interfere? And how could I? And what is she to me? A mere acquaintance, and he my friend."

"Very true; but you can be so irritating sometimes. I fancy Mrs. Leigh is quite hurt that you have not been near them for so long. She says Alice talks less of the doctor business; but then St. Clair gives her little leisure. What between sittings, and visits, and dinners, the man has become madly delighted with society, and dance—I thought they would never stop at the last assembly."

It was all true. I rarely saw St. Clair. I asked him one day if he were writing verse. He said no, he was *living* poetry. After dinner I declined Vincent's cigar, and went up to join the women. I made my peace with Mrs. Leigh very easily.

"Ah," she said, "dear Alice is quite tranquil nowadays; and by the way, Doctor, we are of kin, you know, and I may ask you, entirely in confidence,—you won't consider it a liberty,—what kind of person is Mr. St. Clair? Of course he is a genius, and wears strange clothes, but not always; and occasionally does surprise one."

"He is my friend."

"Oh, of course, and that is why I ask. You see, I am alone, and have to be father and mother, and it is always well to look ahead. It may come to nothing. Are his habits good?"

"Really," I said, "you must ask some one else."

"Oh, then, you mean he is n't a man you can talk about."

"I could talk about him all night. He is to me as a brother. Ah, Mrs. Vincent," I added— "No; no coffee," and, rising, gave her my seat. "Ask Mrs. Vincent," I said, and strolled to the corner where Miss Leigh was looking over some prints.

"You are a stranger of late," she said. "And all that pleasant friendliness we began with—alas! it is squandered, as they say in the South."

"I am a busy man," I said, "and Mrs. Vincent tells me you are as busy a woman." And then, feeling cross and vicious, I added: "And what has become of those grave views of life? Is it still so unsatisfying?"

She regarded me with a trace of surprised curiosity, and then said: "No; I am as I was, and some day you will let me tell you my side. I listened pretty patiently to yours. I suppose that you men who live amidst life's most serious troubles get a little—well, stolid as to so small a thing as how a woman of your society, a mere girl, is disturbed about her days, and what to make of life, or whether just to let it alone and drift."

"And is not happiness everything, and are not you happy now?"

"Happy? That is my temperament; and what has that to do with it?"

"Indeed," I said, "I do not know."

"Then why talk so?" she added, almost sharply. "I do not understand you. You seemed so fair, and now—"

"How comes on the rilievo?" I said, abruptly turning the talk.

"Oh, well enough."

"And my friend, St. Clair; is he not charming?"

"I do not know. The phrase is rather strong. He is interesting. I like him. You should have seen his face when I told him I meant to be a doctor. He looked at me a moment, and then said, Good heavens! and would I cut my hair short, and might he send for me if he were ill, and would I be expensive as a medical attendant? He was certainly very amusing, but it takes two to make a joke as well as a quarrel, and I do not like to be laughed at by a man who—" and she paused.

"Well," I said, "who—"

"In some ways I am more of a man than he. He is undecided, easily led, and expects every one to indulge him."

"I assure you that a more delightful friend no one could have."

"Friend? Yes, certainly."

I looked at her. A little flush like a faint, rosy sunset cloud was slowly moving over her cheek. A signal of something. Was it doubt, or annoyance, or what? I began to feel a renewed interest in the woman before me. It faded when I ceased to see her. It grew up again when we met and talked. As the idea crossed my mind that Mrs. Vincent's schemes might this time be successful I had a sense of discomfort which I did not stay to analyze, but said at once:

"Are there not men who are incomplete without women? I most honestly think that some noble-

minded woman could be the complement of this man's nature. She should be one fixed as to character, resolute, tender, and absolutely conscientious. If she were beautiful, and — well, if she loved him, he would be at his best always. It would be not the poor task of saving a worthless man, but the nobler one of helping one well worth the helping."

"Ah," she laughed:

> "If he be not in word and deed
> A king of nature's highest creed,
> To be the chancellor of his soul
> Were any but a happy rôle.

Some women love and learn. Some learn and, learning, love. It seems to me hard to understand how a woman could with knowledge aforethought undertake such a task. Would you?"

"Oh, I am not a woman."

"Well, it is a pretty problem. Imagine yourself that woman."

"I cannot. But men and women may marry with clear ideas of the imperfections of the being they marry, believing that to love all things are possible."

"I see. But though one might love a man with a bad temper, or morose, or despotic, one might with more doubt face the qualities which come out of lower forms of moral weakness. But how serious we are. Why not invite Susan Primrose to the post of conscience-bearer? Ah, here come the men you deserted."

St. Clair joined us, and presently I took my departure.

Mrs. Vincent detained me a moment. "Really,"

she said in an undertone, "I think our friend is—well, and my gentle Alice—you laughed at me about it at dinner, but now it is serious, I think, and how nice it would be. If Mrs. Leigh speaks to you, do be careful."

"She has spoken," I said.

"And of course I know what you must have said."

"Said! I referred her to you."

"Ah, indeed! She must think that odd."

"I do not see why," I answered shortly. "But I am rather tired of the subject. I must go. Good night."

"One moment," she said. "I seem to have annoyed you; I certainly do not want to do so. I am unlucky of late. I can see no reason why you should object to being asked questions as to your friend by Mrs. Leigh. It is plain to us all that St. Clair is in love with Miss Leigh, and what more natural than her mother's desire to know something definite as to the man."

"And how can I tell her that St. Clair, with all his fine qualities, is unfit to be a husband?"

"Then why shift the responsibility of an answer upon me?"

"Because you think otherwise. I shall tell him exactly what passed."

"Perhaps that is best. It may really be of use to him. His character—"

"Oh, confound his character! I beg pardon, I did not mean that; I was rude. I must speak out frankly to Mrs. Leigh, or not speak at all, and I prefer the latter course. I would rather not discuss it further."

"Well, as you please. Good night. You are very cross and most unreasonable."

XXII.

I HAD never before been so vexed with Mrs. Vincent. She was apt to meddle gently with the affairs of other folks's hearts, and sometimes to retreat bewildered or dismayed at the consequences. Moreover, she was subject to acute attacks of social remorse, and suffered out of all proportion to the greatness of the crime. I must say that I am not an easy quarreler. I am troubled deeply by a cold phrase, or a hasty word, and lie awake repentant upon the rack of self-examination. Therefore it was that our two notes of self-accusation and apology crossed each other next day.

She said:

MY DEAR FRIEND: I was persistent, and perhaps — yes, I was unreasonable last night. I mean unreasonably persistent. And it may be that I am quite wrong. Fred says I am, which will perhaps comfort you. For although I hate to be wrong, I hate more to be told I am, even by Fred. I do not understand you, but that does not make me grieve less at having annoyed or hurt you. As to Alice and St. Clair, I shall never say another word, and if I were not afraid of a pledge, I would vow never to be kind to man or woman again — unless the man is the friend to whom now I excuse myself. And if it only were you.

ANNE VINCENT.

There was also a package, which was a first edition of "The Urn Burial," and inside was written "I am so sorry. 12.30 P. M. A. V."

And as for me, I had written: "I was rude last night. Pardon me."

Then, the day being Sunday, I sulked over my misdeeds, and went to see St. Clair. I found him idling in his studio before the bas-relief of Miss Leigh's head.

"Oh, come in," he said. "Jolly cold, clear day, is n't it? Had two hours on the ice at six this morning. Is n't this a success?"

It was, and I said so shortly.

"What 's the matter?" he queried of a sudden. "You look as you do when I have been in mischief. By all the gods, I have been a good boy of late. I gave Clayborne money to invest for me last week. I have n't been to a beer-garden for days. I have even paid my dinner-calls, idiotic custom. What is it?"

"Nothing. I have to say something unpleasant."

"Then get it over. I loathe suspense, as the fellow said when he was about to be hanged."

"Mrs. Leigh has asked me to give her some idea of your character. Oh, confound it! how stiff that sounds. She thinks, as we all do, that you are in love with Miss Alice, and, like a straightforward mama, says, 'Is this a good man? Will he be the husband she ought to have?'"

"Well, old man, what then?"

"Oh, simply this: Do you want to marry Miss Leigh? If so, I must go on. If not, you are doing her a wrong, and I need say no more than that."

"Is n't she noble-looking?" he replied. "Just look

at that head; the color of the hair; the tranquil kindliness of the face; and the proud prettiness of the neck."

"Do you love her?" I said, abruptly.

"Oh, how do I know?"

"Are you really a child, St. Clair? Yes or no. How is it with you?"

Then I looked from him steadily at the medallion. I could not tell why it so touched me, but, as I looked, my eyes filled. I was puzzled at my own causeless emotion. Meanwhile, for this brief moment, he was silent, and then his face, as I turned to it, took on a look I well knew of peculiar sweetness as he said gently, "Would you like me to love her?"

"No," I said.

"And why not?" he went on, touching the clay here and there.

"Because you would make a bad husband. You would in a year break her heart. You would not want to. She is a woman resolute, proud, and firm as to her beliefs, and the duties to which they bind her. You have no creed. You are amoral, not immoral. You would hurt her all the time, and at last lose her love and—and—"

"Her respect. Do I lose yours sometimes? Yes, I know I do; and you mean that you can fail to respect me and yet cherish my friendship, but that with her love must go with respect. Is that it?"

"Yes," I said, astonished.

"And you could not, would not, tell her mother all this, and you came to say so to me?"

"That is it."

"Am I a bad boy?"

"Oh, don't," I said. "It all hurts me. I see trouble ahead."

"And you like her. She is your friend, and so am I. I would have been a weak fool under like circumstances, and praised you through thick and thin, right or wrong. Pretty head, is n't it? Would you like a copy of it? I 'll send you one."

"My dear St. Clair, what are you talking about? How can you trifle so? How do you suppose she would like that, or Mrs. Leigh?"

"Hang Mrs. Leigh."

"With all my heart; but let us have no nonsense about this matter—I mean, as to this head. As to the rest, I have done my duty as to a friend. Go on, or stop. It does not concern me. I am free of responsibility." I was vexed with his indecision, and dissatisfied with the rôle I was playing.

"And what do you advise? Now, really."

"How childish you are, St. Clair." I shrank from saying: "Give her up. You are unfit for her. Women do not resist you. You were made to please for the hour, not the year." I went on at last quickly: "If you are honestly in love, I have no more to say. Go on, and God help her and you. Perhaps he may, and time may show what a fool I have been."

"Frankly, Owen," he returned, "is it of me or of her you think?"

"Of both."

"Of whom most?"

"Oh, what matters it? I have said enough."

"Too much or too little. But do not think I am not

thankful, and more thoughtful than you suppose. Let us drop it. I hear that you may go to Charleston about this yellow fever."

"Yes; I am asked to go South on a Government commission to study the outbreak they have had. I think I shall go. I saw it once before, and, for various reasons, no one else is quite as well fitted for this not over-pleasant task."

"It is risky."

"Very."

"I would n't go. What 's the use?"

"It is a simple duty. I should like to go away for a while, and it fits in nicely."

"Darn duty."

I laughed, "Ah, if darning duty mended matters, how easy a place were this world to live in," and we parted.

XXIII

WHAT I had said was true. I was out of spirits. My work bored me, and, as has been seen, I was peevish and irritable.

The next evening I was at Mrs. Leigh's. They were alone—or rather Miss Alice was—for a time.

"Good evening," I said. "I am very busy, but I have come in just for a little talk, and to say good-by."

"Yes; Mr. St. Clair told us this morning. He thinks it quite needless—your going, I mean."

"Needless? He knows nothing at all about it. A man of experience is wanted, and I, unmarried and without ties, am of the otherwise available men the most fit for it."

"But you have friends, and sometimes those ties are strong."

"Yes, very."

"And is—is the risk great? You have never had the fever. Is there no one who has had it who can go?"

"No one. And I want a change, too. At times life wearies one. You ask why, and I cannot tell. A fresh duty, and absence, winds one up, and we go on again."

"And is your life wearisome? You, who live for

others, who are dear to so many, the rich, the poor. Ah, you smile, but you know we are friends, and I manage to learn all about my friends."

A sudden impulse mastered me. "If you were I, would you go?"

"Go!" she exclaimed. "Without a doubt."

"And you advise me to go?"

"I am only a girl," she replied.

"You are my friend."

"Thank you; would one say to a soldier, 'Stay at home?' Yours is a nobler calling. I do not think the world has bonds would hold you back."

"That was kindly said and true. But you overrate me,—I mean as to what you said a moment ago,—and to be overestimated always humiliates me. I shall think of what you have said, and, please God, will come home safe and happier."

"You ought to be happy. It seems strange to me that you are not. You cannot be compassed about with doubts as I am, and see duties you must not accept, or a path you may not tread."

"And are you still tormented?"

"Yes."

"And why not go on?"

"It may appear to you odd, but only one statement of yours really disturbed my resolution."

"And that?"

"The idea that—that a woman might lose in the work I look to certain of those nameless graces, those tendernesses, which seem to me so much of her honest property."

"I think so, and I have seen you often. We have

come to be friends. Now, suppose that you promise me you will not go on in this matter till I come back. I have much to say about it, and no time in which to say it. I leave to-morrow."

"To-morrow?"

"Yes; but one word more. If I never come back, of course it releases you."

"It releases me? It releases me?"

"Yes. Ah, Mrs. Leigh, good evening," I said, rising. "I came to say good-by."

"Yes; I saw it in the paper, and Mr. St. Clair told us. I suppose it is not very dangerous, and then, if it is, you are a doctor, and it is a matter of business after all. If you see the Temples, remember me to them. But they must have gone, of course."

"When do you return?" said Miss Alice, who had been watching her mother with a grave face.

"In a month, I hope."

"If you see any nice feather fans," said Mrs. Leigh, "do spend a few dollars for me. There are red ones, really charming."

"Charming? What is?" said Mrs. Vincent, entering with her husband. "We missed your call, and Fred and I have been to see you. You leave to-morrow, your note said. I do not call that charming."

"Oh, it was fans," said Mrs. Leigh. "Dr. North is to bring me some nice feather fans."

"Indeed! Bring me nothing but yourself. I am horribly troubled about you. It recalls our talk about fear. Are you ever afraid of disease?"

"I? No—yes. I have always had a slight, a vague dread of this especial malady. I think I said so. I

find that physicians often have some such single pet fear."

"Like a soldier's," said Miss Leigh, looking up at me. "That alone would make you go." Mrs. Vincent glanced at her curiously.

"We won't talk of it," said Vincent. "Write soon and as often as you can."

"Oh, not to me!" said Mrs. Leigh. "Is n't it dangerous?"

"No," I said, laughing. "And now good-by. And this day month, Miss Alice. Good night."

XXIV.

F my really perilous commission I have nothing to say except that it brought some empty honors, and cost my colleague a sharp attack of the fever. This detained me longer in Charleston, and I got home early in May, tired out with nursing and anxiety. I had heard often from home, but, until a week before my departure, nothing of moment. Clayborne from time to time sent me large sums to be used among the poor of the pest-stricken city. He wrote that of course it was all due to bad hygiene and carelessness, but that I might like to spend some of his spare cash, and thus excused in his cynical way acts of unusual generosity.

A week before my return came a letter from Mrs. Vincent.

Our friend St. Clair [she wrote] has been at his wicked worst of late. He told Fred last month that he had been gambling in stocks, and was in debt. The speculations, Fred says, were simply absurd. I asked him why he did it, and he replied that it amused him. I cannot make him out of late. I ought to say that Mr. Clayborne at once paid some thousands for him, remarking that it was so comfortable to make a fool of one's self now and then. I said that St. Clair puzzled me. He has shut up his studio, declined recklessly to complete his contracts, and really told Mrs. Leigh, to her disgust, that he could not finish the relief of Alice's face, because work bored him. I do not think he has been near the Leighs since you left. It is too an-

noying; I shall never try to help anybody again. I am furious at the thought of how right you were. If you bring Mrs. Leigh any fans I will never speak to you any more.

I reopen this letter to tell you an astonishing piece of news. St. Clair came in on us to-day, and would we tell him when you would be at home. Fred said, "Next week." Upon which he was so sorry, because he was to sail for Europe in four days, and gone he has. The new statue for Cleveland has to be cast in Paris. I do not believe it. At first I suspected that Alice had said "No," but this is not so, for, as I said, he has not been near her, and the last time they were here they were on pleasant terms enough. I am dying to ask Alice, but she is hardly the girl to put questions to, and, besides — however, you never appreciated her duly, and I do not want to bore you.

She told me to-day that he had called before he left (his first visit in a month) and that he did nothing but talk about you, which amused me.

Fred sends his love, and I am as always,

Your friend, A. V.

P. S. I hope that St. Clair wrote to you, but I do not believe he did. That man is capable of any virtue or any vice. Do share with me my exasperation.

This letter gave me much to think over as I gladly left the roses and jasmines of the luckless town, and rolled away northward. I was annoyed at St. Clair for the hundredth time, but it was like being vexed with some charming, thoroughly spoiled girl, and of course I wrote to him.

Arriving late I found a note from Mrs. Leigh, which perplexed me.

She said:

I am so glad of your return, because I need you. We have had Dr. Simpson since our return, but really he has not the least respect for my judgment, and if I do not know the constitutions of my own children, I should like to know who does or

can. Alice is not at all well. She does not know I send for you, but do come soon. Of course, it is a drawback to have a single man, but then you are a relative, and no longer young. [I was just thirty-seven.] Come soon, etc.

I dropped the note as I stood; picked it up; read it again, and went at once to Mrs. Vincent's, although it was as late as 11 P. M. Mrs. Vincent had just left her husband. After we had exchanged warm greetings, I said, "Won't you ask Mrs. Vincent to come downstairs? And, Fred, let me see her alone a moment; I want a little advice."

"Really," he said, "I ought to charge for these consultations. St. Clair was at it last week. Mrs. Vincent makes a good average for all easy-tongued women by secretiveness quite exasperating."

"After the consultation," I said, "I will consider the fee."

"It ought to be large. What do you get for being rung up at midnight?"

"When you are through perhaps you will ask Mrs. Vincent if she has gone to bed."

"She has not," cried Mrs. Vincent, entering. "I heard your voice, and really, I only came down to say how glad and thankful I am. You look tired, but then—it was a fine thing to do. I was proud of you. I could not do it; my friend could, and oh, I liked—liked it well, and so did Fred. He has bored me to death about you, and now you are back, and—and I thank God."

She had my two hands while she spoke, and was a little tearful as she ended, being nothing if not enthusiastic as concerned her friends.

"I cannot weep," said Fred, "but you are very welcome."

"You men are horrid. I shall leave you."

"No; it is Fred who will go, and you will stay."

"A consultation, Anne. You will find me in the library."

"And now," said Mrs. Vincent, "this is altogether too delightful. What can I do for you? It is so pleasant to know that I can give you anything. But tell me about Charleston. No, not now; another time. What is it that I can do?"

Now that I was into this grave consultation, I began to distrust the doctor and myself. I reflected that I had not enough considered the matter; that, in short, I was a fool. As a result, I put off the fatal moment.

"Presently we will talk," I said; "but first tell me all about everybody — all my friends."

"Mr. Clayborne has been as fidgety as a fish on a bank. I think he loves you best of any one on earth — better even than Clayborne. What is your trick of capturing people?"

"How can you ask? I am your friend; you must know. And St. Clair? Of all his crazes, this is the queerest. To love a man who does everything you don't expect, and nothing that you do expect — alas! it is hard on men, and on a woman harder. But I suppose the fancy for Miss Leigh is over, or has it gone to wreck? How has it ended?"

"How cool you are," she replied; "and how easy to call it a fancy, and what has come of it. You may know as well as I."

"No, no; but I must not invite you to violate a professional confidence."

"Indeed, it is useless."

"Oh, then you do know?"

"I did not say so. And is all this because you came here to tell me something, and now repent a little?"

"Good gracious! what a woman! How is Fred?"

"Oh, very well. And if you wish to put off what you have to say, I shall go to bed at once. I am—"

"No; it may as well be now as at any time."

"Ah, that is better."

"Read that."

"Ah, Mrs. Leigh wants your advice about Alice. I am so glad. I advised her to send this very morning. You know I cannot have you myself, but I want every one else to have you, and now I shall be easy, quite easy, about Alice. It is only that she is looking pale."

"But I do not mean to go. You know I am only willing to go in consultation. I do not want practice. I—"

"But this! Oh, this is different."

"Very. And you who got me into this scrape must get me out of it. I do not know how you will do it, but you must manage it, because I do not intend to go."

"You cannot mean that?"

"Yes. Tell Mrs. Leigh that I chanced in, and that I do not take cases outside of my house. Anything you like."

"But it is not true; and after all, it is I who ask you to go, and imagine my making an excuse so ludicrous as that to a woman of the world like Mrs. Leigh.

I am quite willing to do anything sane for you; but this! What is your real reason? You do have a reason for most actions."

"Oh, I don't like that hard old woman. Surely one may choose one's patients."

"Assuredly. But write and say so. Why come to me?"

"Then I shall fall ill. I simply will not go."

"I am sorry; I am more than that—and after I took so much trouble. I am—well, just a little hurt."

"But I would not annoy you for the world."

"Well, that is a strong phrase. Why do you?"

"I cannot be Miss Leigh's physician."

"Ah, it is Alice then?"

"Yes; it is Miss Leigh. Cannot you understand?"

"I? No. What do you mean?"

"Mean! Cannot you see that I love Alice Leigh?"

"What a fool I am! Oh, you dear, delightful man! The thing I have dreamed about. And now I see it all. All. And how long has it been? And does she know?"

"I think—I am sure not. And one favor I must ask. It is that neither by word nor sign do you betray me."

"And I must not help you?"

"No."

"And as to Mrs. Leigh, you are quite too tired to see patients. You are not well. You wished to leave it to me to explain, rather than to have to say abruptly in a note that you cannot come. And that was so nice of you. But you will dine here with Alice to-morrow?"

"Indeed, I will not."

"But I must tell Fred?"

"No."

"Then good night. I hate you, and I am so glad."

When I went to see Mrs. Vincent it was only with a sense of my own difficulties, and a desire to find a way out, but with no clear idea of how it was to be done. The note had of a sudden set me face to face with a grave fact in my life. I cared deeply for a woman, and had never meant to do so again. At first this self-knowledge humiliated me, and seemed disloyal to an ideal I had loved and lost. I am sure that most deep affection is of gradual growth. I am as sure that the discovery of it as something victorious over memory, prejudices, resolutions is often sudden and surprising. It was so to me. I recoiled from the practical issue of becoming this woman's physician, and in the recoil, and in the swift self-examination which followed, I knew that I loved her.

I walked away but half pleased with myself. It was plain that I had not dealt fairly as to my friend, or perhaps with him, and yet I had meant to do so. I had had, as the Indians say, two hearts about it, or, as we say, had been half-hearted. I laughed as I thought that half a heart had been an organ incompetent to carry on the nutrition either of love or friendship.

At last I reached my home, and sat down with a counseling cigar to think it all over. Emotion had clouded my mind. Now it became more or less clear to me. St. Clair had seen through me as I had not seen through myself. My cigar went out. I relighted

it. It was rank to the taste. I threw it away. It was like some other things in life.

As I rose to go to bed I turned over the letters on the table. There was one from the citizens of Charleston; warm thanks for a great service—Alice Leigh would like that. Beneath it was one from Paris in St. Clair's well-known and careless hand. I read it as I stood:

DEAR OWEN: Sorry to have missed you. I am busy here with my new studio and the statue group for Cleveland. I want you to pay the arrears due for rent in my old den in Blank street, and have what is worth keeping stowed somewhere. My remembrances to the Leighs. I left Miss Leigh's rilievo in the front room. Keep it. I am not sure that the eyes are quite correct. The upper lids drop straight, or rather in a gentle curve, from the brows; it gives a look of great purity to the upper part of the face; the peculiarity is quite rare, but is to be seen in Luini's frescos. In fact, the type is medieval. The slight forward droop of the neck is pretty, but not classically perfect as to form. Also, the head of my charming model is rather large for the shoulders, which are a trifle out of proportion to the weight of the head.

Write me soon and often. I shall not answer, but I shall intend to do so. Love to the Vincents and to the historic giant from your friend, VICTOR.

For a moment I stood in thought with the letter in my hand. Then I read it again with care. Had St. Clair deliberately sacrificed himself to me? Was his devotion to Alice Leigh only the expression of his adoration of an unusual type of human beauty? I had before seen attacks of this passionate idolatry. Had he become satisfied that marriage was a contract he could not honestly enter upon? That would have been unlike the man. I was exceedingly perplexed.

XXV.

HE next day I called on Clayborne, but found him absent, and toward noon wrote to Mrs. Vincent that I hoped to find her alone that evening.

The enigma of last night was no clearer in the morning. A hasty note bade me feel sure that she would be at home about ten, and of course she would take care that we should not be interrupted. After that, and until I could talk to Mrs. Vincent, I resolutely put my problem in a corner, and tried to forget it. But despite my control it turned every now and then like a bad child and made faces at me, so that I had an uneasy and very restless day.

I found Mrs. Vincent alone, and quickly saw that this gracious actress was on for a large rôle, but just what was not clear to me. The room had a rather unusual look. The easy-chairs were not in their places. A crimson mass of velvet heavy with Eastern phantasies of color hung in stately folds over the far end of the grand piano. I knew it well as one of St. Clair's wildest and most extravagant purchases, the fruitful text of sad sermons by the friend whom the naughty poet called Rev. Dr. Clayborne. St. Clair had sent it to Mrs. Vincent the night he left — a royal

gift. I glanced from it with a full heart to the roses which were everywhere in bowls and tall vases, each, as I well knew, sedulously arranged as the woman's perfect sense of harmony in color dictated. She herself was dressed with unusual splendor, a style not after her ordinary habit, which rather inclined to a certain extravagance as to stuffs, and to great simplicity in outline and forms. Also, she wore two or three jewels, and these especially flashed a warning to me as to there being some surprise in store.

As I entered, the house rang with the triumphant notes of a love-song of Schumann.

"Ah, this is good of you," she cried, rising. "And now that we shall have a nice talk, I am so happy. Did you hear how my piano was rejoicing with me?"

That was so like her, and I said as much.

"Yes," she went on, as I looked about me; "we are *en fête* to-night. And you look so grave, Owen." Once in a great while she used my first name, being, despite our extreme and long intimacy, little apt to be familiar in certain ways.

"Yes," I said; "I am as you say, because I am troubled."

As I spoke, Vincent entered. "Ah, North," he cried, "how welcome you are!" and cast a glance of faint amusement over the room and his wife's costume. "I have been away since morning, or I should have called. I met Clayborne on the steps."

The historian carried a book and a stiff bouquet, which he deposited on the table. "Here," he said, "are the essays, pretty obvious stuff, and some flowers."

Mrs. Vincent thanked him profusely. "So good of you," she said. "What lovely gardenias!" And presently she set one in her belt, saying, "A thousand thanks."

"Why not one?" laughed Vincent. "Why is that noun only plural? It ought to have a definite value —one thank. Then one could grade one's gratitude. Why not thirty-seven, or half a thank on occasions?"

"Quite true, quite true," said Clayborne. "The nouns which are only plural must be rare. Hum—" and he fell into a reverie.

"How absurd you are, Fred," remarked his wife.

"Well, the surroundings account for that. Do you entertain Haroun al Raschid to-night, Anne?"

"I entertain myself," she replied, and I detected a little ocular telegraphy meant for Vincent alone. Then Clayborne looked up.

"I can recall no other," he said. "And in French it is the same, and in Arabic. I must look it up."

"Mrs. Leigh told me to-day that you had been to see her," said Mrs. Vincent.

"Yes; we are old acquaintances. You know I was Leigh's executor. That girl must have a pretty fortune. There has been a long minority. Why did not you marry her to St. Clair?"

"I did my best," returned Mrs. Vincent, gaily. "And there is the mama. Now what could be more fitting for you?"

"I! What! Me!" cried Clayborne.

"You might let me mention it to the widow."

"Heavens!" he exclaimed, "I believe you are capable of that, or—or of anything. Let us go and look

at the dictionaries, Vincent. Mrs. Leigh! Ye gods of sorrow!"

"Well, think it over," cried Mrs. Vincent, delighted, as the historian rose.

"I leave you to your patient, Mrs. Vincent," said her husband. "Is the case a bad one?"

"Prognosis favorable," returned the wife, laughing and striking a few gay notes on the piano. "Diagnosis certain. Am I professionally correct, Dr. North?"

"I never interfere with other folks's cases," I said, and we were alone again.

"And now," she said, "what is it? And do look happier. Fred says I am crazy to-day, and you would not let me tell him. But what is wrong? Surely—"

"Oh, everything is wrong," I said. "I have been a fool, and I have helped to break up St. Clair's life, and I must talk about it to some one."

"Of course. And perhaps I can help you. Only women know women."

"It is not the woman, it is the man, that troubles me. To have won a possible happiness at the cost of a friend, I—I—"

"But perhaps the happiness is not possible," she answered.

"That were no better. I should be doubly punished. Do you think he loved her?"

"I do not know. St. Clair is seemingly so transparent, and then of a sudden you become aware that they are only surface reflections that reach you. There are curious depths in that man's nature. Presently, as Fred says, one is off soundings. I understand you, I think, and I am sorry for you. And now what is it?"

"Read this letter," I said.

As she read I saw a faint smile of pleased surprise gather upon her face. She re-read it. Then slowly she folded it up, gave it back to me, and took a perfect white rosebud from the jar near by, and put it on the table beside me. I took it up mechanically.

"It is sweet," she said, "and pure, and there is no canker at the core. The rose is my dear Alice, and you may take her if you can, and without a pang."

I was accustomed to these little dramas, but this was too much for me.

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"And you read that letter?"

"I did."

"Well," she said, "I never was more fully persuaded as to the depth of folly, of incapacity, one may find in a man."

"You are enigmatical."

"Am I indeed? May I show that letter to Alice?"

"What! You must indeed think me a fool."

"I shall not answer you according to your folly. And people say you are a student of character and see through women! It is past belief; but trust a woman's insight for once. Ah, certainly I am at home. Show Miss Leigh up. Here comes the answer to my enigma."

"O Mrs. Vincent! This is one of your little—"

"Hush! Is n't this joyous?" And she struck the keys again until the glad notes of the love-song rang through my brain.

"My dear Alice, how good of you to come!" she cried. "You must have left your dinner-party early.

Why, it is only ten. Dr. North has just chanced in, and now we shall have a quiet talk. You have not seen Dr. North since he came back. My room is *en fête* to welcome him."

"When you give me a chance I shall tell him how glad all his friends are to see him safe back again." Her words were quite formally spoken.

"It was worth the price, such as it was," I said, "to come home and find one has been thought about." Her formality affected me, and I struck automatically the same note in reply.

"And now tell us about it," said Mrs. Vincent. "You were detained by Dr. Roy's illness?"

"Yes; I had to be nurse and physician."

"Well, I want to hear it all—everything; but pardon me a moment, and talk of something else. I must answer Susan Primrose and two invitations for Fred."

Upon which she retired to a desk in the corner, and we fell into talk. At last I said, "I did not keep my engagement. To-day month, I said when we parted, and now it is—"

"Nearly two," she replied.

"Oh, quite two," ejaculated our lady manager from the corner, rising with notes in her hand. "Excuse me, I so want to hear that I cannot write; I have made two horrid blunders, and I must ask Fred if he will dine with the Carltons. I shall be back in ten minutes," and she was gone. Then I began to understand the drama, and was instantly on guard. At the door she turned back. "Do make that man smile a little, Alice. I found him too stupid for belief. I turn him over to you. Half an hour have I spent in

trying to make him understand just the simplest thing conceivable. You may be more fortunate, or—well, more clever." And she was gone. I could have pinched her.

"And the problem, Dr. North?" said Miss Leigh.

"It was purely personal."

"And troublesome? Mrs. Vincent has left me heir to the talk I interrupted."

"Yes, very troublesome."

"I am sorry, and you look so tired. I can understand that one might suffer long in mind and body after what you have been through. Seriously, I do not suppose Anne Vincent would have spoken so lightly about anything that I might not talk of. You once said that we were friends. Perhaps you do not know by this time that I take life gravely, even its friendships. Can I help you as a friend?"

"No," I said, grimly.

"Then pardon me. I did not mean to be indiscreet, or—or—"

"You are not. You are only and always kind. But Mrs. Vincent is sometimes carried away by her moods."

"And you think we should always be responsible for our moods? I wish I were. It is so pleasant to coddle them, and I do try not to." Then her eyes fell on the crimson and gold embroidery. "Have you heard from Mr. St. Clair? He is very apropos of moods, is n't he?"

"Yes; I had a letter to-day. He is in Paris."

"I wish I had his sense of irresponsibility," she returned. "It must be so nice to have a heart and no

conscience. You must miss him, or you will, I am sure. Every one must."

"Yes, I shall. I am fond of him."

"Anne says he will return in the autumn."

"I do not know."

"Do you think he knows?"

"Who can say?"

"I have been wanting so much to see you to talk again of my plans. Do you not think—"

"I don't think," I said. "I prefer not to discuss the matter. Ask some one else. I am useless."

"How short you are with me. Don't you know friends are for use?"

"I suppose so. Mine fail me at times."

"Now, do you mean?"

"Yes."

"Well, I must turn you over to Anne Vincent. I don't wonder she considers you difficult."

"You are certainly the last person to whom I should go." The situation was fast getting out of my control.

"That is the worst of friendships between men and women. Mama says they are impossible. There are so many limitations. I wish some one would write a book about friendships. There are so many about—about other things."

"Your mama is quite right," I said. "Friends should be kept in their right places, and that is not always easy. They take liberties. They—suppose I were to ask you an impertinent question?"

"I don't like the word—the adjective."

"Well, un-pertinent."

"That is better. I should try to answer it." But she glanced uneasily at the door.

"Do you care for Mr. St. Clair?"

"Care?"

"No. Love him?"

"That is a question you have no right to ask."

"I am his friend."

"Then his friend is unwise, and permit me to say—"

"Stop," I said. "Do not hurt me more than you must. What I ask profoundly concerns my life, my—"

"I would rather you said no more. I beg of you to say no more."

"I cannot pause here. I must speak. If you love him, I have been false to him. I have misunderstood. I have trodden roughly on sacred ground. What I thought it right to say to him I said without seeing where I stood."

"But now," she said, "I must understand all this. I confess I do not. You ask me if I love Mr. St. Clair, your friend."

"That was what I said."

"And it was more, so much more, than you ought to have said. But now I will answer you. I do not think many women would—I will. I do not. You have gone to the limit of friendship, and perhaps beyond. And now please to ask Mrs. Vincent to come; I must go away. I had only a few minutes."

All this was said with unusual rapidity of speech, and she rose as she spoke.

"One moment," I said.

"Not one," she said with a nervous laugh, taking up the bud I had left on the table and plucking it to pieces leaf by leaf. "Oh, not a minute," she repeated. "Please ring."

"Alice Leigh," I said, and, speaking, caught her wrist, and felt as I did so the slight start of troubled maidenhood, "let the poor rose alone. Try to think it is my life you are busy with. What will you do with it—with me?"

As I spoke, she regarded me a moment with large eyes, and then sat down as if suddenly weak, her fan falling on the floor. Some strong emotion was troubling the pure lines of her face. What was it? Pity or love? Then, looking down, she said, as if to herself, "And is this the end?"

"Of what?" I said, faintly.

"Of me, of my life, of it. Why did you speak? Am I wrong? Am I right? Why were you so cruel as to speak—to speak now? You might have seen; you might have known. I have duties before me; I have a life. I—I am not fit for—for anything else. I mean to be. Oh, I wish I were not a woman. Then, then I should know how to do what is best, what is right." And upon this, to my bewilderment, she burst into tears and sobbed like a child.

"Alice," I said, "I love you."

"I know, I know," she cried. "And the worst of it is I—I—O Owen North, be very good to me. I meant to have done so much."

"Are you sorry?"

"Yes. No; a thousand times no."

"Oh, here is Anne Vincent."

"My dear child," said that matron, "your fan is in a dozen bits."

"And so is everything else, Anne Vincent—everything. Let me go."

And she ran out of the room, and left me to tell the end of this story to my friend and hers.

THE END.

[redacted]